

FRAKCJA 16

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90s

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arguments for future

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The issue in *Your hands* completes Frakcija's first five year plan. Performatives, body and technology, theatre of memory, iconoclastic theatre, motion primitivism, Russian actionism, sexuality, body/difference, utopia/dystopia, Eastern Europe, institutions, the alternative, cultural policy, festivals, Artand, Brecht, Berlin, Berlin... these are some of the topics our magazine focused on over the past five years. More important than the topics, however, are the articles which have had an impact on the Croatian scene during those five years making the existence of a magazine like *Frakcija* a necessity, and the interaction of those articles and our authors. This is why we can now offer, as we do in this issue, a survey of the new Croatian theatre and dance scene, which was not the case in old times when we were starting the magazine. Even though most of the artists worked within the confines of official production, the critical response was lacking and they were considered a foreign body in this context, which for some became a life-long predicament. Today we can ignore the power of this completely heterogeneous, demanding and expanding scene, seeking its relevance in a context broader than Croatia. The scene consists not only of directors, choreographers and performers, but also includes the whole network of artists and institutions somehow affected by and affiliated with them.

It is only logical that *Frakcija* should celebrate its fifth year by presenting the context which brought it about and in which it developed, all the more so as the magazine itself faces new challenges of getting rid of the academic halo, engaging more dynamically with the problems and topics presented by the contemporary production of and thinking about the performing arts, and internationalising its audience through bi-lingual issues. Which is by means a farewell to the Croatian scene. From now on, we shall discuss it in a broader context.

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directors

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how to kill a ruler

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Directly or indirectly, the party in power in the Croatian theatre of the nineties has, unfortunately, been in the service of the then ruling political party, or, at the very least, harnessed within the common ideological horizon. The ruling theatre party for the most part wasted its efforts, occasionally with the self-abusing laughter caused by the still young stars, on insidious cover-ups, during the crooked seasons of the Tudman decade, the songs of the regime which successfully turned patriotism into chauvinism, transmogrified Croatia's defensive war into an aggressive one in Bosnia, dehumanised the victims by degrading the persecutors, and reorganised a democratic struggle into a mob rule. Certain prominent members of the ruling theatre party admired such political transformations as the capacity of directors of accompanying non-theatrical representational forms: the accompanying reflect of the ruling nationalist movement, glorifying military parades, the exuberant military ceremonies in the Croatian National Theatre, or the equally exuberant funeral

The members of the theatre company, Reubio, composed, as claimed by the official practice which, beneath the stage of a newly democratic and recently renewed bourgeois society, played the stability and steadiness of the state community on the stage absolute ideological or otherwise authorizing the Father of the Nation, adherence to the party line and the associated national identity. The members of Reubio have in the contemporary field of the stage – basically romantic-minded, given to a few mythic speculations, dramatic theory (the literary) and other publications, which could, especially in its orthodox form, reflect the wish for images of the world and of Croatia – if not on the dramatic level (this, certainly for the sake of the theatrical, and a contribution

subject's prerogatives. Within this ideological framework, a theatre performance was given the minor task of executing the tempered signifying instructions of the author, revealed from the pulse of the dramatic text: the staging is conceived as a materialisation of the author's worldview, in which a temporary interruption of relations must as a rule be resolved, if only provisionally, but with the relations themselves remaining intact in the process. The spectator can feel the "shiver of katharsis" of the bourgeois-national type, but not the awakening of the critical awareness. Theatre was, therefore, cast in the role of the sublime conductor of spiritual transition, the restorer of the unquestioned values of national or international literary heritage, which would then feedback healing the wounds of the battered national being, curing its provinciality complex and routing it against foreign adversaries. In order to at least stage such return into the imaginary spiritual homeland, the majority theatre party had to further reinforce the "tyranny of the theological theatre," already prolonged under the previous social and political regime. This scheme of hierarchically ordered in such a way that it isolates and controls the actor/performer, the present enunciatory subject of the dramatic discourse and the corporately realised of its stage performance, through whom the areas of uncertainty and contingency is injected into the provisionally defined structure/dier in short, the most dangerous – because hidden beneath the mask of a fictional character, party of the order based on the fact that in the beginning was the word (of the Author, Maker, Father, Ruler, Chief of the dramatic text), the cryptic clarity of which must in the end be understood as the inscription of the speaking body. To render it as visible, as ascertainable as the mask of the dramatic theatre, the basic feature of which is undecidability, which

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Mentalities PRAGUE - EXERCISES



Borna Bulovic: KRALJEVO

in turn makes us feel we rule the world. Or at least Croatia, its small-scale model.

Fortunately, the story of the Croatian theatre of the nineties does not end here. I would like to believe it only starts here.

The ever more active new theatre practice should not be imagined as a minority but homogenous group of theatre artists, critics and theorists gathered around a common programme but more like a "minority forum,"¹⁷ a group of individuals ready to combat – aesthetically but sometimes also politically – the ideological offensive of the theatre in which dramatic text – a variant of natural language, the allegedly primal and "most powerful communication system" at the disposal of the "human collective" – Edmund – functions as a central medium for revealing "truths" (truths which, it has to be conceded, need theatrical interpretation, but which nevertheless remain unquestionable truths, it is precisely because of this, it seems, that the new Croatian theatre of the nineties questions the role of and often tries to dispense with the dramatic text as a privileged toolset of a possible fictional world of the performance and its signifying tendencies, the latent political control mechanism, which, helped by the director's interpretative motif, looms large over the total "performance text" [de lifelines, Elem, etc.] in order to ensure, in fact impose,

the presence of the writer's word/voice in the theatre communication. Stagings freed of the (scripted) text's commanding sway supply their energies from the "real," "factual," i.e. "zero world,"¹⁸ which they take as their template, from the empirical reality inhabited, among other things, by various discursive forms, including literary texts, which the performance, intentionally or otherwise, engages intertextually with. Such intertextual exchange is radically different from, and potentially more liberating than, the "slavish" (as Deleuze would put it) relationship in which the staging/performance is only granted the right to a re/constructive rejoinder. In theory, the new Croatian theatre of the nineties actually enacts an aesthetic and therewith an ideological turn towards the "post-dramatic" (Lehmann), postlogocentric, even post-textual theatre, insofar as some stagings manifest an explicit desire to initially affect the spectator following the course of the performance initiated by "direct experiences" (Alar) – by non-discursive means. In principle, the theatre explodes, destroys, and (eventually only) redefines the "theological scheme" in order to loosen its ideological grip: it dissipates and redeployes the function of the author/logos of the staging/performance according to all constitutive subjects of theatre performance, from actor/performer to spectator, or variously undercuts the

¹⁷ Where a "minority, an isolated" can receive the majority and its power, as well as power a general." (György Márkus: *Geometrie der politischen Ökonomie*, 1972.)

¹⁸ "as an organized and internally structured (social) system, ruling up the primal text... of many possible discourses, its 'ideal' and constitutive surroundings – Every possible discourse is offered in the background of everyday space of the concrete individual, towards it." (Lutz Ratz: "Was verbindet die helden pastiche?" in: *Croatia Diskurs* 10, 1991.) (in english/croatian: Pula: 1995)



Đorđe Radić: *ELIZABETH*

Jasna Rajković: *OBSERVATIONS*

author's demagogical pretensions, exposing the national language and its spoken stage to the aggression of patriarchal or non-verbal sign systems, the performer's body must often bring the main subversive role. Playful in the gap between its palpable-material presence and the irremovable absence due to the always already culturally, socially, ideologically, but also aesthetically alluded stagings/performances it engages or gets involved in, the body enacts the jangling semiotic moving of performance signs based on the need to - at least until they reach the scope of the spectator's signifying and conceptual activity - and in a preconceived, already *in/for/combed* meaning. At the same time, it tests the feasibility of its countersexual longings against different contexts, personal as well as cultural, ceaselessly historicising and writing it.

These doubts were already, however seldom and always by means of metatheatrical commentary or procedures inscribed in the dramatic text itself, brought to consciousness and foregrounded by the majority/ruling theatre, in the final analysis, the satirical pranks and a more liberal interpretative atmosphere notwithstanding, always inclined to succumb to complacent attitudes and the rules of the dramatic, logocentric, "theological theatre," the generator, narrator and promoter of the illusion of a stable reality and of an incontestable social order. How

is it possible to expose the dominant ideological discourse by merely replicating its autoheteristic system, the critical charge of which, though *ins/presented* on the thematic (and narrative) level, inevitably dissolves under the pressure of a petrified hierarchical structure, in which the prerogatives of the constitutive subjects are already firmly established? The only thing the more democratic members of the majority theatre party can concede is a redistribution of power with the aim of striking a balance between the primary (*textual*) and secondary (*directed*) author, but only if their common position of superiority with respect to the performer/actor, reduced to the role of carrying out the orders of higher instances, is not jeopardised. Doubting the content of the conclusion and the texture of the repressive order, the new Croatian theatre opts for direct or indirect political criticism, refusing not only the signs of one bit of each and every party and speaking only for its "undetermined opposition" (Melchinger). A theatre operating from such positions is constantly creating tensions and resists every system bent on inevitably and longingly, presenting it with its possible/imminent decay or, at best, restructuring. This is why that theatre has in the twenties in Croatia been subjected to ignoring, refused finances, indirectly banned, kept in marginal institutions or left to its own devices outside the institutions.⁴ Should we survey all representative stagings

⁴ The new Croatian theatre did not come out of the blue in the twenties. On the contrary, it was conceived in the late twenties and performed clandestinely over the last decades (mostly in printed form). It has found its synthesis, called only in the late sixties with the constitution of the New Theatre Festival (Zagreb), and a theoretical one in collaboration with the Performing Arts magazine *Teatrolog*.



of the new Croatian theatre of the nineties and essay a description as if it were a single, continuous subversive and alternative theatre piece, created in the context of proliferating, by no means harmless, products of the majority theatre party, we would come up with its distinguishing, even innovative, features placed within five different but interrelated and mutually dependent perspectives:

1. the critical attitude

The fragility and transformability of (personal, sexual, gender, national, religious) identity is being discussed/defended, or a descent attempted into the abyss of the body where elemental forces – of attraction and rejection, love and hatred – desire for an impassioned merging with the other (body) and/or for its passionate destruction – spring from and collide (Milorad Petrović's *Fractal* and *Everybody Goes to Disco from Moscow to San Francisco*, or, in a different representational and semantic code, Ivica Bojanić's *Fetral*). The apocalyptic side of everyday life becomes, somewhat paradoxically, a form of subversive political attitude (*Observations, Slowing down, Uncertain Story* by Bobo Jelić and Nataša Rajković). The utopian project of decontaminating the community by the beneficial effects is realised at least in the theatre by means of the apparently spontaneous (at first sight amorphous) performance within a performance (Rado Medvedek's

Buckern). Contrariwise, the dramaturgical structures of the performance itself expose the – classic, egocentric, (Croatian) national, so-called Western – theatre as an institutionalised, testing site and an effective means of repression (Goran Sargej Prošut's *Confession*). The sunny side of revolution (Ivica Bojanić: *Prljavo*) and war (D. B. Ilić's *War Kitchen*) is exposed. A radical and implacable deconstruction of the patriarchal national myths, discourses and (re)writings of indelible myth-makers and manipulators (Branko Brastrov's *Bacchante and Caesar*) culminated in a shocking, symbolic and ambiguous action at the heart of Brastrov's *Marathon*: three marathon runners, a farmer, a craftsman and a clerk, three "small men" condemned to the Beckettian finish-at-the-start, unfurl and then carry into the grave the Croatian flag, with black instead of red and blue stripes and black instead of red chequers. Branko Brastrov has daringly revealed the most nauseating dilemma of the schizophrenic Croatian re-wangled national state: where is the line line that separates being a victim from becoming an aggressor and when is it overstepped?

2. different working methods

The rehearsal the purpose of which is merely to complete the performance as a "material reflection" (instead of the literary text, or the director's imposed text), is replaced by a creative process of gathering, original – or, more



Taylor: EBT: IMAGO

precisely: more original - narrative and representational material, in which the performer becomes ever more prominent. The performer is an individual who (through her own story, attitude or style, gesture or word, gradually fits into temporary structures, always open to (de)reconstruction, not only during the process of creating a piece to be performed, but to some extent - greater certainly than in the dramatic theatre - while performing in front of the spectators as well. Even though most of the representative works of the new Croatian theatre of the nineties are results of long periods of improvisation, and some can even be considered open representational structures (especially *Observations* and *Slowing-down*), it should be emphasised that improvisation is used in varying degree and for many different ends by various authors. Borut Šeparović's *Montablot* characteristically develops the material of a "single" work over a period of time: the material gathered during several years is always selected and shuffled anew for different outings of the "same" work. Sergej Prokaj selects and further develops certain sections of the generative work *Man Obs* thus originated out of *Confessions*. The process of creating a theatre piece can even, at least initially, have a primarily socio-dramatic and psycho-dramatic purpose, like Ivica Buljina's indeed *Concetta*. Branko Brčović merged two works created in disparate social, religious and cultural contexts, in Norway and in the Albanian community in Macedonia respectively, into a third. *Three Noria Avarit Blasi*.

3. new dramaturgy

The prerogatives of dramaturgy (and hence of theory) seemed to include the whole process of creation and the totality of the moving sign systems and performance strategies employed; the structure of these works therefore becomes much more complex than the one offered by the traditional dramatic theatre. Of the procedures of "new dramaturgy", the most often used are: juxtaposing various performance forms and styles; deconstructive montage; intertextual and intermedia dialogue and conflict (especially in Brčović's work); laying bare the representational act/intention by meta-theatrical means; multiplying representational planes (*Confessions*, *Uncertain Story*; Borna Baletić's *2 Legendi*); metanarrative manipulation of story space and time; fragmented narration and cut-up plot lines simultaneously presented (*Uncertain Story*, most of Brčović's work, particularly *So, So*); self-referential statements of the performers, but indirectly of the directors and dramaturgs as well (*Confessions*, *Uncertain Story*).

4. deconstruction of the relationship between and the identities of the character and the actor

Through careful preparation and the process of creating a work and by means of numerous devices of "new dramaturgy", the space is cleared for representing and playfully engaging with the Third One, the constant flow



Umberto Boccioni: 1911.



Branka Branković: SACCHAMALA

of being between and around the two seemingly opposed, incommensurable identities. The space is cleared for the performer her/himself, however polymorphous and ungraspable, the performer/actor/character, surrounded by spectators, is a vulnerable but passionate player, guided on, but also ready to invest into and thus expand upon the process of creating and performing a work, ready to question and re-define her/his own (pseudo)autobiographical experiences, certain only of the permanent uncertainty of the questions that interest us with respect to her/him - "who says - I?" and "what will the body do?" Although most of these works count on performing the "personal" in a significant degree, *Observations* and *Slowing-down* by Jelčić and Rajković deserve to be singled out. The complex procedures of creating the character, as opposed to identifying with it, graft the real or imaginary fragments of the performer's personal stories (situations, relationships, moments, events, phrases ...) onto the fictional structure of the performance. These fragments are then left lingering until the actor, in the moment of a renewed identification with their emotive and narrative content, activates them in the performance itself, exposing them to the risk of potential - always partial, but always different - restructuring and contingent misreading. Performer(s)/actor(s)/character(s) of the two Jelčić/Rajković works have created a fantastic

theatre being which constantly interferes in the referential sphere, frustrating the closure of senseless/fictionalisation of the staged goings on. In contrast to Kirby, who in the treatise on "Acting and Non-acting" concludes that the "actor is visible in the character", what is intended here is to make the character visible in the actor. Therefore, the only name the character can bear is that of the actor/performer her/himself.

On the other hand, certain works exist on the multi-coded, actually total acting/performing, where the actors/performers are forced into constant re-integration so as to avoid the closure of the sign/utterance in any acting code or performing form (cf. *Confessions*), in order to resist the subjection of their real or imaginary performed features to an ideological system, to prevent casting their bodies in various social and political roles. Branka Branković's *Cassius* is by far the most complex example of this, because the performers are laid bare not only linguistically but physically "intraculturally" (Bharucha) as well. They are marked by remnants of traditional national acting codes, estranging/enchanting, successively or simultaneously, and combine at least four different modes of representing and dominating characters: ironically demonstrating and citing the actions and attitudes of the characters (primarily the *Slowness*), identifying temporarily with the features of their possible fictional



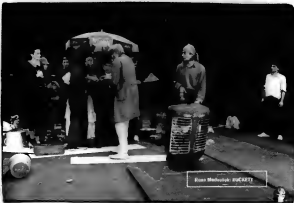
(sub)consciousness (the Croats), abandoning themselves to the waves of unleashed performing passion, the energy of the body overflowing the representational borders, rising (or at least seeming to risk) chaos (the Macedonians, mostly); sometimes, on the contrary, the work of the raw performance material is shown, the product of a feigned representational recklessness, disturbance almost. Such apparently unrestrained yet polyphonically structured play of signifying constantly expands and narrows the referential field of representation, hiding the tracks of personal and national identity of the performer/character (or providing false ones), causing incessant explosions of signifying nuclei within a hypertrophied intertextual and interperformative organism of the staging/performance, and preventing its complete submission to a coherent, sensible and completed interpretative system/text.

5. questioning the representational roles and performance strategies of speech and body

The verbal system of most works is exempt from the law of rehearsal, which is tantamount to disorganised, stage speech with its calculated intonation and clear diction, aimed at euphony and transparent conveying of information, the crucial signifying activity being shifted from the mesothetic (poetic) word to the fixed and completely individualised systems of paralinguistic signs. The variants are many: alternative invented languages, the private language of each performer, the language which resembles

coded but mumbled sounds produced by the child learning a natural language (Medvedich's *Bucklett*), the atonational choreography of the metaphorically pregnant phrases, vocalised and even materialised through coagulation and chiselling of sounds (Djukan's *Placi*), embodying speech/sound in Caesar, where sound releases words from the shackles of arbitrary meaning, turning them into vibrating bodies, scoring machines, breathing beings – soaked in the sound features of natural languages, these words thrown, like the real, palpable bodies of the performers, into the flow of representation, burn out and sometimes produce unbearable noise almost completely obscuring the score, yet instantly revealing its own rhetoric: willy nilly we are thrown into the metonymic minefield of the Balkan melting pot.

The performer's body resists the dictate of the word, ceasing to be merely its escort and support, a moving decor of verbal behaviour, and becomes involved intentionally or spontaneously in the processes of incessant attracting and rejecting, changing and releasing, re-deployment but also disavowal and loss of significance. The performing body acts as a heated generator of instability of the illusion of reality, and of the theatre as well, and hence of the social/political/aesthetic order which would then be represented and established in the Theatre, after what is sufficient and incontestable. The theatre of Nataša Lulečić (*Imagot*), Viki Matula (*Manchuszen*) and Đelko Vukmirica (*Mr. Segla*) is still easily graspable in terms of referentiality, while Ilića



Buljan's *Piled* creates an abstract or symbolic, musical even, slowed down and almost lyrical, curt movement style. In Buckett, Rana Madushek explores and combines relationships between bodies extended through objects, bodies threatened by objects or rescued by objects, bodies as parts of objects, objects turning bodies into objects and bodies turning objects into bodies. In the painful moments of Boris Šeparevč's work *Fragile*, bodies long to hide behind the mask of however flimsy identities, but the wounding looks of the spectators easily inscribe them in their own ideological systems, succeeding in ruthlessly crushing their desire. The fragility of the body caught in the grindstone of the (dramatic, verbal, representational) text understood as a grid of significances interpellated by cultural, social, political, national, gender codes is simultaneously a proof of its weakness and the source of its power. The text rules the body, but the body feedbacks undermining the stability of that rule, yielding at the moment of its apparent triumph to another text, even "writing" its own plurisignificant text, or giving itself over to the flow of desires, becoming a site of intersection of energetic currents flowing through it without ever

freezing into a fixed meaning and representation. The body is not enough for the performers in Caesar. Only momentarily disciplined, referential or abstractly choreographed, it is always heated: its limbs are disordered and disoriented, its movements derailed, as if it would shed its bloated, sweat-drenched, burning skin, bursting apart under the pressure of the swollen grotesque corporeality. The bodies in Caesar are hypertheatrical, polymorphous bodies scattered over the whole representational landscape, dispelling the mimetic-realistic fog, or destroying the harmony of enchanting, dreamy images of the visual theatre. As soon as the representational-performative disciplines bring the bodies to the heel of the intentionally stylized sign, they cut loose, escaping the taming intentions of the directorial or spectatorial (meta)discourse by means of momentary, explosive and (seemingly) spontaneous reactions. In the liberated space, on the brink of chaotic kinetics and deflating cacophony, aggressive and deformed bodies swirl and voices of the performers clash, creating an energetic whirlpool sucking the entranced spectators-fellow players into a pot for "melting face and live flesh".



Goran Sergej Prizmić: CONFESSIONS

(Artaud): The only way out is, paradoxically, to dare to look into the light of the "reflector of the critical reason" (Brecht).

Mostly divided in dramaturgical and representational relations, the aesthetic and ideological, but occasionally even openly radical socio-political (especially in the work of Branka Brsković) poetics of the new Croatian theatre with the compromising aesthetic, ideological and political values of the majority party in the (not only) Croatian theatre and the social context it was reflecting and creating, provided some of its participants to challenge also the basic conventions and alleged oppositions (such as fiction-reality, truth-lie, presence-absence) in the structure of theatre representation by means of complex interpenetration of staging/performance and theory, emphasising the ambiguity of sharp distinctions and questioning the ontological instability of the allegedly opposed entities, theatre and the world, performer/actor and character, sign and referent, body and text (as a grid of significances). Sergej Prizmić's *Confessions* offer only provisional conclusions, or rather new starting points for further discussion. This metatheatrical and in its every segment self-referential work makes the very theatrical medium confront its own institutionalised repressive nature at the same time linking it closely to the linked performance-representational forms, primarily performance art, video and various genres of body/movement theatre, dance and mime. Such polymorphous representational content is made to accommodate one of the most radical and consistent anti-logocentric performances in the Croatian theatre, Goran Bartol Jadoš's *Man-Član*. The inserted

performance gradually became the frame and the cohesive force of the performance-essay on the theatre but also of the performance-critique of the national, radically logocentric theatre tradition, especially of its modern profab vestiges. Together with the spectators, Jadoš was finally given the answer – in the beginning of the theatrical was not the word but the cohesive body. But it is surrounded by witnesses and their words trying to de/pre/scribe it. The dual nature of the body cannot be completely tamed by any text (whether literary, historical, verbal or non-verbal), but the dual nature of the text cannot likewise be replaced by any body. The text is the means of tripping the subject in an ideological code, but it is also the site of its creative freedom within its own codes, manipulating knowledge, it also guards knowledge. The text is the law that would control the body, but it is at the same time always already a code the body incessantly escapes. It can even be reduced to a mere thing the body can cut and paste as it pleases. The text would then stop the movement of the body. The body would then break the rigidity of the text. The text is a place where identity is lost but also gained, a dark glass in which the subject can catch a glimpse of her/himself, and the body briefly escape the dangers of real/material presence, thus preserving a part of itself from decay and death. Was not the performer's body, desperate with such knowledge, enraged and crazed, forced to use the words "I'm killing the man within me" to announce its release? (Translated by Tomislav Brlek)

*Marija Blazević is a theatre critic and member of the editorial board of *Proleto*.*

A black and white photograph of a person's hand holding a pen, with the word 'playwriting' overlaid in a white box. The image is a close-up, focusing on the hand and the pen. The person's face is partially visible in the background, looking down at the hand. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows. The word 'playwriting' is written in a bold, sans-serif font, centered within a white rectangular box that has a slightly distressed or textured appearance. The background is a soft, out-of-focus portrait of a person, likely a woman, with her hair and features visible but not in sharp focus. The overall mood is artistic and contemplative.

playwriting



WESTERN IDEALS by Ayana Sajo

loses the performer's body and the play stops, so rehearsing (rehears) words are heard: there is no 'afterlife' in that respect. It is the performer's body that Sajo comprehends as ultimately sacred. The paradox of the play develops even further. The *Ris Lees Green Walls* is not a secular play (I would understand it as a metaphysical poem), but its 'staged body' is secular and mortal - Gulliver dies. The strongest 'reality effect', however, is the play is not produced by death (as the 'ultimate power that ends the game'). Death is so constant, common, inevitable, palpable, close and crucial that no one bothers to question it, the air itself is lethal. What is painfully 'real' or breathtakingly vigorous is hence Gulliver Junior's **live and fragile** body and his **identity performance**. He refuses to eat, he refuses all physical comforts in prison, and he chooses corporeal decay to prove that his will power is stronger than The Shooter's gaspower. Here identity is provided and sanctioned by death: steeped in the Western tradition of affirming 'singularity' in death throes. As Jonathan Dollimore eloquently claims (1998), death is the enduring essence of all existing self-negating and self-hating identities: death is the major Western ontological difference because its lure promises escape and disavowance from the 'poor' human finitude into divine legend. Loving your own death means loving your own legend; it is the potential disavowance that makes death wish glamorous. However, this mechanism is usually "confounded by the immensity of actual death" (Dollimore, 1998: 20). As we have already said, veneration of death is not retrieved exclusively for ancient Christian philosophers. Death plays a central role in the works of contemporary thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas, and I find that the words of Jean-Luc Nancy (1993: 12) express most clearly this 'vital' mythology of death:

"No more than it can die - no more than it can -seriously- die, if we can say that with straight face - can the subject be born, or can it sleep - immortal, unengendered, and immiscue: this is the triple negation over which the life of spent ones, imperturbably adult and awake."

One could say that Sajo's Gulliver talks directly to Death. The Shooter is only Death's (theatrical) mask. Perhaps The Shooter in fact represents the devil Lord himself while Gulliver Junior is his good rejected son. Junior could be understood as Lucifer, but reinterpreted as son ('Junior') who justly rebels against the violent Senior God (this is the classic Gnostic approach and an equivalent of the mythical story about the relationship between Jesus and Khrisna). As Sajo occasionally calls The Shooter 'our Father' and talks about a multitude of his 'gunhappy' children, Gulliver's rebellion aims against the whole violent World Order as well. It is very important to notice that Gulliver's words match his deeds: he is not "just another imposter and logoneic poet in prison", he is the **action of refusal** and the **body of disobedience**. Above everything else, through Gulliver's rejection of The Shooter as his Father, Gulliver also rejects the 'patriarchal' or fiducially order. Sajo is explicit in saying that Gulliver is glad not to produce the gun-starving sons of his own. It turns out that Junior is tormented because he refuses to act like a soldier; a terrible disobedience in a system endlessly at war. He says: "I am ready to be anything, anything but a conqueror..." Gulliver is **dissociated** from The Shooter's order, but he is **dissociated** just as painfully from his own female lover. She waits for him and he hears her voice throughout the play. In all her plays, Sajo knowingly uses stage directions as the autonomous narrative voice, shaped in the Greek chorus tradition, but not addressing the potential director with anything like "technical

instructions". This choric voice is usually the most intimate and lyrical; it communicates directly with the audience for the reader, but characters in the play can hear it as well. In the play *The Red Like Green Walls* Sajo offers two **male bodies** and an echo of the bodiless and nameless **female voice**. What we learn about the invisible and passive female figure is that "standing endlessly by the window, she gradually turned into a wall". Love will not redeem these lovers, there is no promise of eternal salvation. Love lasts, and it is mutual, but to feel it means to suffer the impossibility of its realization. Since *The Shooter* is the one who finally makes the decision about life and death and who separates the lovers, he is symbolically endowed (by the playwright) with the greatest responsibility and power in the play. Sajo also insists on "unsexualised" love between Gulliver and The Woman. Perhaps Jai Dolan (2000 [1997]: 63) offered the explanation for the whole range of the phenomenon of desexualisation in contemporary drama: "But sexuality, in Western culture, is as rigidly constructed and proscribed as gender." Since sexuality is "compulsory", it also belongs to *The Shooter's* realm. Therefore, Sajo points out, it must be recounted: "There is another explanation for the programmatic division of body and spirit: it is – again – a Platonic metaphor for 'disembodiment', dissociation, i.e. death. The forbidden word of the 44th described Western regime is, of course, pleasure. Even Roland Barthes, the philosopher of desire, finds pleasure only in the text, not in the body. Even Sajo's plays reflect the most restrictive principle of patriarchal reason, where to kill or condemn desires (and desires is historically attributed to the female "secondarily" and therefore "dangerous" unsexed) means to control the mind. The critique of this attitude persists in the medium of the theater itself, where body cannot be "injured" or "corrupted": body in the theater equates words. This is also the reason why I cannot perceive Sajo's plays as "literature" – rather more like **written theater** (with

Shakespeare's "performance scripts" at hand).

02

Another Croatian playwright, Brano Senker (b. 1947), twenty-eight years Sajo's senior and usually considered a political satirist with a penchant for postmodern pastiche and parody was known in the eighties for "collectively" authoring plays with Tihomir Majlić and Nino Šarabi. In the course of the nineties he began writing plays on his own, in the tradition of the postmodern – neoarchaical – tragedy. Associated with Sajo in his preoccupation with the initial states of *dramaturgic* events, Senker completes the dramatized cycle called "the decapitation trilogy", where he examines the deaths of Nietzsche and Oscar Wilde (*Dandy: A Misdemeanor Night's Dream*, 1993), the Biblical heroine Judith (*Honorous Judith*, 1994) and the Elizabethan rebel Lord Essex (*Gloriana*, 2000). Death is staged very differently in each play, but it remains the focus of the playwright's attention. Dandy resembles Plato's *Symposium* in the sense that the divine figures of philosophers and poets Nietzsche and Wilde and here even the gods themselves (Apollo and Dionysus), attend the luxurious, cosmic, out-of-the-world drinking party. Its style has the sardonic flavor of Aristophanes' *Clouds* and the dark pessimism of the late Euripides. The real gods (Apollo is called "Your Excellency" and Dionysus "Your Highness") reflect the typical Nietzschean and modernist tradition of splitting "madness/Dionysus/theater/body" (on the one side) and "order/Apollo/literature/text" (on the other), but they also reflect the split between the antagonistically positioned and repeatedly contradicted sectors of power and beauty. The resolution of the play, built as a double dispute between two philosophers and two gods, ends with the gods deciding against allowing humans to have both beauty and power, art and political/social influence at the same time. They kill the aspiring artists with the same gesture of boredom, exhaustion and disgust for

* These plays have not been published yet; refer to the manuscripts, given to me by the author.

"DANCE SCENE", written by Christopher YOUNG



themselves. Divine existence is presented as an eternal totem, occasionally brightened by a visit of some interesting human creature. A short and dense version of Wilde's play *Salomé* is performed inside Senker's play as another kind of pastime for the debiles (and for scholars who enjoy endless meta-theatrical links). However, the whole play reads Nietzsche as the true prophet in the sense of the Wilder and Christos Johansen. But this prophet announces the power of the dead god and the glory of the humans, not the power of sacrificed/dead Christ. At the same time, Senker's *Salomé* is a cleverly indogynous Oscar Wilde. The play of narrative mirrors never stops, since we, the audience, know that Nietzsche (in Senker's play called *The Voice*, probably with an ironic nod to Biblical proportions) and Wilde did in fact merge their respective strengths - in our reading or watching of the play. In this respect, not even Gods or Death are more powerful than human art. The visual dimension of the play is worth mentioning: the semantic pairs of crystals (in the form of drinking glasses as well as metaphoric avocations) and blood (in the form of wine and decapitated heads) constantly paint the scene with a disturbing, deadly beauty. From Wilde, Senker also borrowed the traditionally feminine figure of the ever-present and ever-changing Moon.

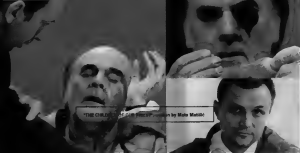
Notorious Judith is an extremely interesting play about a heroine who remains peaceful and loving even in the midst of war crimes. Very much like Sajo's heroines, this character longs for the escape of death. One might read the play as Judith's self-sacrifice, performed in order to finally reunite with her dead lover, but she would not have to choose to kill Holoferne in order to achieve this goal. Judith is therefore not a classic self-sacrificial drama.

Senker's stylistic device of introducing war as a massacre but hilarious comedy in verse, with Judith speaking in solemn, serious and intimate prose, produces the receptive shock of verse and brutal discrepancy - very much like the Porter scene in *Macbeth* or the Greenfinger scene

in *Hamlet*. Now, this really is a war - theatrical **incoherency of representation with real deaths** included. The use of stage directors has a mockingly military and independent voice of its own, since it imperatively 'orders' the actors what to do and how to act. The problematic part is the playwright's existence on Judith's artistic and all too obedient profile - she infers and obeys the words of God, she values the love for her dead lover Marade above anything else, she dies, dressed as a whore because she lets the soldiers distract her on how to seduce the tyrant. Her emotional visions are powerful (she is a true artist, but not a philosopher), and her actions are heroic, yet her mode of behavior is yielding to paternalistic instructions, from both above and below. In this play, Woman equals Wisdom of the Heart (and is no play of Senker's can one find a woman who has both brains and heart). Gloriana, the most misogynist and most political play of the trilogy, claims coldness and manipulative theatricality for the historical Queen Elizabeth, and falseness and lethal ambition for her contemporary 'doubtful' and stage protagonist, The Actress. The poignancy of the play lies in the Queen's monologue about the **theatre of the dead**, where we are 'played by other people', who are 'not as forgiving to us as we are toward ourselves'. Senker subtitles the play 'Elizabeth and Essex or Theater and Sex', but desire is unmasked as just another political and/or emotional forgery. In Senker's plays, death is staged only to be defeated, over and over again, by another kind of **desire**, located in the **aesthetic expression** of the crisis of art. But the battle with Thanatos is constant and excruciating. Violent dramas of repeated decapitation are a title in point.

03

The thematic coupling of death and desire undergoes even harsher dissociation in Sajo's play *Orange in the Clouds* (1996). Although this is her first play, it addresses



"THE CHILDREN OF OUR PRIEST" written by Matej Malbaš

numerous issues that will be elaborated in her later works. One might say that *Orange in the Clouds*, in being an "afterlife" kind of play, stands in complementary relationship with *The Ash Like Green Mists*, framed as the "last hours of life" kind of play. Both plays insist on personal integrity realized in this world and both treat afterlife as a zone of disturbing powerlessness. And yet, only death offers the "true" perspective on lived experience. We could also compare it with Senka's *Victorious Judith*, in a sense that *Orange in the Clouds* desecralizes female heroic sacrifice (in the name of love) and reveals it to be just a noble illusion. Furthermore, Sajo firmly states that the purpose of female existence should not and must not be just erotic love. In time-honoured Socratic fashion, Sajo equates Death with the Truth (revelation). She, in fact, shows many conceptual similarities with another Croatian playwright, Mate Malbaš: both of them tell their metaphysical stories with death as the narrative starting point, both are attracted to the metaphor of global flood, both use characters who are often neither dead nor alive, both are obsessed with their characters' individual and ethical responsibility.

The difference lies in Malbaš's preference for the grotesque, while Sajo usually chooses the lyrical. In Malbaš's last play, called *The Children of Our Priest* (1996), Death will "mark" the "sacred" priest's body with mortal sickness, brain cancer in the shape of a sign, because the Priest facilitates the abortion of female

vivacity: a child (he sets her free from forced detention). Death will execute Malbaš's priest because he has helped in the execution of two children: his lover's child, in the days of his youth, and now the female player's child. But Malbaš is not a traditional Croatian writer, more often than not he exposes the dark hypocrisy of the Church. He unmasks the ways the Church or religion are used to blackmail as with the notion of Last Judgment and death itself. In his early plays, especially *Once and Marinko*, characters take "death" into their own hands. Once and Marinko are manual workers who play with death by pretending to be dead in order to escape the cruel political and economic order. And they succeed, but at the high price of being cut from their homes and families. They end up being displaced without the possibility of return, the hardship of manual work is over, their Croatian family are safe with pension funds they have earned while working in Germany, but, alas, everybody considers them dead. They are thoroughly and infinitely cut off from public existence.

Back to Sajo's dissections: *Orange in the Clouds* deals with the female character, Štita, who arrives Up There (Purgatory, Heaven, Hell, we do not know for certain) believing that her dead lover Oscar has been "calling" her from Beyond, but when Štita finally meets him again, it turns out that Oscar has forgotten her a long time ago. There were never any messages from the Other World, she made them up. Huge metaphysical misunderstanding



continues. Shilla wants to go back to Earth, but she is not allowed to do so, because her physical death is final and she has already "spent" her human incarnation. After a serious breakdown, apparently possible even in the Clouds, Shilla chooses to go back to Earth in the form of a canary bird, where the caged life completely wipes out her mental strength and enthusiasm. The central rhetorical strategy of the play is Shilla's emotional, "inappropriate" and wild craving for oranges, a remnant of the human yearning for joy and fulfillment. She "dies" only when the yearning stops. The audience therefore learns that emotions were the locus of Shilla's self. Heavily stereotypical gender-wise (with Shilla constantly flirting with male Angels and justifying her own existence only through the erotic relationship with her dead partner), the play is also the opposite of the cold masculinist insistence on sheer intellect and will power, portrayed in the play *The Rib* like Green Wall's. Joy has a prominent place in this play, but it is again acknowledged as something out of human reach: "angels" self over and over suffocates our "corporeal" identity. The most interesting thing is to see how Sajo travels from the early *Orange* to the later play *The Rib*, eventually choosing for her authorial voice the Hegelian *metaphysics* doctrine, where death is spirit and spirit is death. In Hegel's own words (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, 1987*: 126) "death is both the extreme limit of *finite* and the dissolution of *limitation* (Death is) the moment of *spirit*."

Outside the obvious sharp gender and genre divisions, stands Sajo's play 4 *Dry Feet* (1999). Two characters, the Tender and the Baritone, are a strange, childish and tender duo that plays together while the catastrophe of global flood unfolds around them. Most of the time they sound like singing insane nursery rhymes (sung by Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* - then "infantilization" is at once scary and macabre). As the Sajo's choric commentary in the play goes: "And maybe the game isn't even funny.

Maybe it's like childhood - a prologue to the moment of its own disappearance."

The characters are mentally and emotionally dissociated from the world, but here the world itself keeps reminding them about the inevitability of "bonding" with the total deluge around them. The world quite literally swallows them up with a soft "gulp". Sajo pays homage to Eliot's (1963 [1930]: 82) famous verses. This is the way the world ends/ This is the way the world ends/ This is the way the world ends/ Not with the bang but a whimper. Not even the children, evoked in Tender's dream, are saved. Let us hear the children's doom-song (translated by Tomislav Brlek):

children's choir

A terrible shower caught us on the run,
We sink in the mire, we step through the snow
We have no strength to reach the heights,
There isn't no hills enough for us to go
No mountain road leads there,
Our feet are wet, we stand in the sea
The end is near, so they're saying,
Of being saved no hope have we -
In a few hours, that's all we've got,
Now will drown the whole lot.

Tender

Don't lose breath! Learn to dive!
Don't jump off the raft! You must strive!

children's choir

Cold moss hole covers the field,
There's nothing left down below
It lasted too long, we're drowning,
The sky's blue but the sea's yellow
The time is ripe for holding hands,
We'll take upon us all the blame
We're not guilty of those deeds,
But there's no land for us to claim
The more we fear, the louder we sing.



no hope anyone could bring

loser

Take everything off You'll be lighter!

Don't be foolish! Who's a fighter!

children's choir

If hell can seem in the dark,

maybe the kids can do it too

The first shout sends us off,

into the darkness, me and you

We won't feel we're suffocating,

we'll dream we're roller-skating

In a few hours, that's all we've got,

man will down the whole lot

Why does water take over the world in this play? Is it the Biblical punishment, an apocalyptic vision, an ironic description of human folly, a symmetrical reflection of the humans' water chaos? In any case, here the matter dissolves: again and here bodies float to their death. The water in the picture is not clean (acqua benedicta), but the dirty mud that pollutes the world. The hell Sajo describes is not lit with fire, but soaked with water. Once again, the play is written against the body, against nature and against any hope. Poetic verses are not strong enough to help the characters survive; poetry is just beautiful, visionary desperation. The intensity of Sajo's pessimism and the last resort of poetry in the face of death reminds us of Bernard-Marie Koltès, Samuel Beckett, Thomas Störms Diet. Sajo is also indebted to the existentialist poetics, especially to Sartre's plays. For instance, in Sartre's play *No Exit*, the infernal afterlife proves to be the exact replica of the hellish life before death; there is no boundary between evil life and evil death in this respect. Sartre knows no death at all, only endless existence in the realm of guilty conscience. In my opinion, the attitude about the absolute "malevolence" and wasteland nature of reality, present in both Sajo and Diet, has its roots in their self-negation. In both dramatic poets, self-negation

reaches global, positively mythical proportions. These authors mourn the lost God and the lost Ideal by measuring themselves and the rest of the world by the lack of "perfect" standards and by their fear of death's other side: productivity, creativity, origination, endeavor.

PERFORMANCE. Every writer and every artist knows intimately this fear of performance, but only few make it the ruling locomotion of their oeuvre.

Sajo made it the subject of her play *Reconstruction: Critical Funeral of the First Sentence* (1997/98). In this cruel and funny play the main character, the writer, is called The Man Without Words (or "man bereft of words"), and his "love" is simply called The Whore. One is strongly reminded of the expressionist tradition of European theater, especially the plays by Arthur Schnitzler. The Whore in Sajo's drama uses and manipulates the Writer to death in order to become a free and famous widow, and he gives in because he is unable to find "the right sentence". Only after his funeral does he realize what a mistake it was to get up the search and he finally manages to pronounce his desired First Sentence - but he does so in the afterlife. This comically all-important sentence is deliberately absurd, since now it is apologetically self-addressed. It goes like this: Bury me in the many flower beds of the universe, for I am marble without a name, immobile in words, I am mute. With this words the play closes. We might say that the Writer at last does defeat his fear of his artistic performance, but the victory comes too late. What is symbolically significant in *Reconstruction* is again the playwright's misogynist portrayal of women (in total as "whores") and her sympathetic identification with the male character. It seems that "art" for Sajo translates as a "male domain" and the subject who represents art is without exception cast in the male gender. Lucie Ingary (1995 [1974]: 138) described this phenomenon with a sarcasm:

"We can assume that any theory of the subject has always been appropriated by the masculine." When she submits



to (such a) theory, women fails to realize that she is renouncing the specificity of her own relationship to imaginary."

This subject that feels "appropriate" only in the male gender is also inevitably connected with guilt, like *Orange in the Clouds*. Reconstructions can be interpreted as a play about a remorseful mistake, morality play written in the language of ironic exaggeration. The theme of **dissociation** (physical and metaphysical) continues. Writer is first emotionally dissociated both from the Where and from his writing, then he becomes dissociated from his earthly existence and at the same time desperately aware of it. In this regard, Sajko writes subversive feminine dramaturgy of disoriented selves where not even death becomes a force of integration, there is nothing linear or final about it. Death as **mutability** further dissociates the self.

04

The self, theatrically multiplied and dissociated in death, describes yet another Croatian play: *The Consolation of North Sain* (1992) by Stobodan Šnajder. In this intertextually complicated version of Goethe's *Faust*, with Ariel instead of Mephistopheles and the Otherworld of Death packed with theater actors, Šnajder tells the old Serbian legend about two friends who loved each other so much that they agreed to be each other's wedding guests no matter what. One of them dies, but still comes to the wedding, as promised. After the ceremony, the dead friend takes the living one for a short visit to his place in *The Beyond*. While seconds pass Up There, here on Earth years and years fly by. On his return to the world of the living, the freshly wed husband and soon-to-be father finds out that all his family is either very old or dead. Many

decades have passed. His son is now a grandfather and he dies from a stroke when meeting his long-gone father. And so the faithful friend finally dies himself, of grief.

Šnajder's hero Vagant is really a prototype of a "displaced person" - both in the military technology and in the sense of losing one's ultimate place in the world. In this paradoxical play, where Vagant does not really believe in death, because he lives in the constant company of miracles, angels and Aniels, and where his friend's love protects him only to a certain degree, violent death still proves to be unavoidable, very real and scary. Like some medieval knight with wounds at his eyes, like another displaced figure, the archetypal Don Quixote, Vagant is not ready for the smaller reality. Death comes as a punishment for Vagant's inability to respond to violence appropriately (with violence), very similar to Sajko's play *The Rib Like Green Walls*.

In the play *White* (1997), written by the young playwright Dubravko Mihanović it is again the intense and tender male friendship we are looking at, once again threatened by the prospect of near death, since one of the protagonists is seriously ill. The dramatic game we might name "death will choose one of us" seems to reflect the terrible intensity of the war and postwar years in Croatia. It does not lead to new spirituality, but to the analysis of absolute desolateness of the afterlife. As Šnajder and Sajko point out, "life in death" is life without emotions, without tastes, without joys, without colors. It is a graveyard, grim and gray yard where we are still, painfully, alive.

05

The Christian background of sin and punishment, employed in many of her earlier plays, is completely abandoned in

the Sajo's latest short play *Archetype: Medea* (2008), where we get to the bottom of playwright's uneasiness with female role as such. Medea says: "It's hard for me to speak as a woman/ I could be a woman like people are schizophrenic, / hiding the uterus in the clasped fist of a big man. And later on: A woman I am not. What is woman? A position of support and obedience, says Sajo. No wonder this Medea establishes her identity with violence: she just repeats the violence that she has experienced as a woman she does not want to be. Sajo never for a moment conceptualizes womanhood as something other than slavery. All her plays are **protest plays**, but 'the system' is seen as thoroughly deadly in the Sartrean sense, there is no way out. What can be contrasted to this attitude, for example, is Helene Cixous' view (1991, 41): One can emerge from death, I believe, only with an irrepressible burst of laughter. Laughter interrupts not only the 'long history of gynocide' but also the deadly monumentality of the masculine oversteering banishment of death. The (dramatic) conflict with the male world starts when the woman laughs at the warrior's bravado posture, not when she "prays" for his next safe conquest or when she feels "compassion" for his important historical tasks. Joy, thought Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, best disturbs the oppressive order. Boris Sackor proved it with his Nietzschean play *Dandy*, and with all his dramatic faith in the power of aesthetic passion and laughter. Paradoxically, it was the male playwright whose female heroines transcended the servitude of the Croatian death order or the Croatian male order of war cruelties and humiliations. We may compare it to Vera Mierova's famous performance called *One Mysterious Thing*, dedicated to Josephine Baker, where Mierova, as a solo performer, steps out of the circle of humiliations and repeated internalized and verbalized, violence only after the smilingly expresses pride in herself and her 'Devil's costume' (i.e. costume made by the traditional standards of the male interpretation of the female gender).

Only after she looks at the audience proudly, with the word joy coming for the first time and gloriously from her lips, does Mierova intimidate the deadly system of disrespect, shame and underestimation. And the extent to which the male gender fears disorderly laughter of theater performance is best captured in Eliot's predictably misogynist and **funny** little poem called *Hysteria*. Indeed, Eliot was deadly serious about *The Male Waste Land*.

06

Let us part with several remarks about Vera Sajo's oeuvre, paradigmatic in their theatology and gendered masculine subjects. Although I think that death in Sajo's works tends to be too holistic, I regard her plays highly for their ecstatic and lyrical writing style and for the energy of the conflicts they raise. She goes very far indeed in rejecting the unjust or cowardly behavior and she manages to dissociate herself from *The Shooter's* regime, yet her cognitive double always wears the mask of Death (as the *lethal-choice*), not the one of reproductivity/wife/freedom. Is this death some kind of revolutionary or 'radical' negativity? My answer is no. After Shoshana Felman, I find radical negativity in 'the analytic or performative dimension of thought'. At once what makes it an act' (cf. Felman, 1993: 165). And death is not a performance, it is a state of absence, opposite to the theater and its corporeal presence. To stage death itself - as Sajo does - is of course a contradictory and powerful gesture, and that is what makes Sajo's work so exciting. On a less obvious level, she reminds me of Christopher Marlowe and his Faustian paradox: passionately debating with God about God's non-existence. Another paradox surfaces when we try to defend the liveness of the theater over 'dead' literary forms. I will not repeat here Philip Auslander's (1998) outstanding arguments, but I will side with him and with similar theoreticians who recognize that all theater performances

no matter how "physically" explicit and how undevourable form "the present moment", do however employ different 'steady' forms of verbal representation and mediation. Stage and representation never travel apart. And moving a step further, Sajo's plays about the 'living' of death (and the notion of necrosis). Thanatos becomes our regular friend, Angel of Death our familiar stage companion. **Death is therefore not only the king of dissociation, but also the president of the liminal and hence the theater director as well** (elaboration of the theater as liminal zone is of course a favorite topic of Victor Turner's). The feminist signature of Sajo's writing is her - by all means theatrical - intervention for the most sacred boundaries: boundaries between liveness and death. That being accomplished, the dissociated or plural self of her protagonists becomes able to shatter the pyramid of the whole patriarchal or discriminative hierarchy. Death is wisely used as the final curtain that makes all of us inclusively and permanently - other. And also "equal" in our **liminal frenzy**. As Sajo's Medea explains: I could only be *bed down/ never calmed down/ never settled down,/ never at rest*.

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nce

90

90s visiting art

written by
goran sargolj priklad

In what way can a dance performance be put together without a dance atelier, a budget, a producer, an educator, degree-granting dancing schools of higher education, marketing and a space in which to perform it? The Internet? No. Multimedia? No. Virtual reality? No. Croatia?

The created prolonged a long-standing agony of the infrastructure: subsidies and diffusion of dance education. Croatian dance has continued to exist within the framework of inherited conceptions from the 1950s, when a certain cultural activist of the socialist realist school answered a ballet company's request for a subsidy: "Do balletists get salaries too?" Although dance has occupied an increasingly significant place in the invention of the Croatian cultural scene for years, until the beginning of the new century the total subsidy for dance in Croatia was smaller than individual subsidies of certain independent theatre companies. Such cultural strategised up to a point where, in the end, a great number of dancers and choreographers left the country in search of work, and their return to Croatia they encountered trafficking in human beings, which was logically a consequence of the economic crisis. Local subsidies from an equally small number of theatres, that the beginning of the new century brought, were associated with a change of government, and the new political promises in the fundamental judgement of dance to art. Today dance is the only art that does not even have its own space in the cultural policy.

And professional improvement, too scarce. There are no dance producers, college-level dancing support. However, the things that are available are: a hand, shaped the avant-garde dance scene in the 1980s, and, on the other, established a system of people that can no longer be neglected by the state. Here we shall talk about precisely those who offered new options to the repertoire of dance, from the engineers, specially for new dance, to the artists, who were not only

not getting the usual, agreed, state following, but also a performing with partners.

The nineties and their Don Quixotes

The first sign of a change in the dance scene appeared and shattering the long-standing concept a choreographer develops out of the logic education at a secondary dancing school, and in a company, the end of a dancer's career, and the end of choreography.

The man who broke with the past was a young view was Borislav Separević, the founder of the Adriatic Theatre. His first choreography *Disappearance* appeared in San Francisco with a second production in Zagreb. It is a story of a young man who for about seventy performances, while in Croatia he managed to perform only once and for charity at the Adriatic Theatre, in order to carry out the performance. It was necessary to perform it as one of the repertory pieces of the theatre. In which the show was performed by a group of professional dancers, on the other hand, it decided to donate all the proceeds to a charity. The theatre and the dancers performed without remuneration. After that performance, Separević tried to continue his work, but he was not granted the good will, there was no support, and he was simply not able to continue his work. He was co-organised by a group of artists, and he was invested in that project with a group of artists, and he was not through.

In the late 1990s, when the dance scene was burning, there were several attempts to create a new system, but they were not successful. In the end, the system remained the same.

English Dance Company (EDC). COW LEGAND SACKED OFFWARD





Resulting: **EVERYBODY GOES TO DISCO FROM MOSCOW 2 SAN FRANCISCO**

had mostly no formal education in dancing. Almost as if having created an aesthetic following, he started off and gathered the whole generation of young artists who, even today, play a significant role not only in dance, but also in music, dramaturgy, the visual arts, design etc. His joining to the international trend of high-risk dance was marked by specific qualities that did not pass unnoticed in the context of the international production.

Both in terms of subject and expression the performance *Everybody Goes 2 Disco From Moscow 2 San Francisco* dealt with experience of the East European context, the context of transition and violence, but also of someone else's stereotype, which would be emphasized in his next production *Everybody Goes 2 Disco* – arose out of the modernist revolt under the strong influence of Merce Cunningham's biomechanics, used in Šeparević's previous project called *Map Opera 101*, while Fragile turns to East European mysticism and recycles the ideas of the third theatre in the West European context. In terms of subject the performance revolves round the idea of identity's convertibility – performers from several European countries gathered in the performance and their projections were juxtaposed into the myth about conversion of Saul into St. Paul. Radicalized identities, problems of an individual's relationship with a gap in his own physical reality as well as with a gap in objectivity of his identity, an issue of language ranging from repression by the political correctness to

repression by assault – all this helped to make the performance that has become a cult in the East European context, while in the West it has been regarded with disapproval that could be attributed to the label "of the performance (to fit in the contemporary" trends of breaking free from abuse concepts as well as from production based on individual contestations that always sound similar. The fact is that not one international dance company can survive by performing at the East Europe in festivals, so Šeparević had to abandon the performance and set out in search for a new way in which to organize his production that could ensure not only essential working conditions, but also independence from the dominant trends of novelty which soon became the mainstream. Mara Senaridž emerged from the generation of dancers who during asked themselves in the Zagreb Dance Company which, together with The Contemporary Dance Studio, has been the backbone of Croatian dance scene for years. After withdrawing from the company she founded her own company, Studio Mara, in which performers get together for a particular project. One of the features of her production is a constant cooperation with the performers who are not part of the dance establishment, but who have significantly participated in various kinds of performances and whose artistic optimism has grown after participation in her projects.



Photo: Marek CANTO-SAMPOLSKI

Her trilogy *The Parasols*, *Touch A Wicked Woman* and *Enc And Fugite* reflected the need for high aestheticism of dance production in all its aspects - from movement to design of the performance. The reaction was logical, since the earlier production was based on visual ideas from the twenties which, on one the hand, were marked by covertly/political theatre and, on the other, by the conception of *beautiful* in a sense of romantic and sentimental. In terms of subject the trilogy is two-tracked: we find exploration of the complexity of male/female relationships on the one hand, and observation of the performers' changes through their personal life experiences on the other.

The first major radical change in the work of Marek Seawold came with her performance *Under The Bamboo* which, after its presentation at the first selection of *The Arsenale Project*, successfully appeared at numerous international festivals. In this minimalist deal the process of passing through various choreographic challenges, based on contacts and harmony, also indicates the theme of the performance – a journey towards ours and which is on the other side of the barrier. Her last performance, *Cartography*, is another radical shift in her own expression. Seawold has shifted her focus from surface and calculation to a landscape of the body, space and imagination. Thus the body becomes the scene of penetration into the depth of the surface, but also a map of emotions and self-acrobacy.

The person who played the most significant role in rethinking of the physical presence and movement in the theatre of the nineties is a choreographer Jazna Frankel-Grizajdof who was also unacknowledged by the Croatian dance establishment, but who does not see these acknowledgments as a proof of her success. Her choreographies are seen in traces in the performances of some other authors or in her own performances which first emphasize a phenomenon, and only then her own authorship. Her most important works were achieved in co-operation with Branka Bencovic, the queen of the Croatian theatre radicalism. A respect for a performer's competence and abilities is what could be said to be her transformation and an important involvement in Bencovic's choreographic thought. Working with actors who had little or no education in dancing, Jazna-Frankel-Grizajdof insisted on refinement of their bodies through the body's potential of its movements, instead of trying to reach a peak of their performing skills. Therefore her choreographies are never fascinating in terms of skill, but in the way she achieves the potential of the body to be readable. The body never speaks for itself, but it offers patterns and structures which should be formed in combination with the scene, the text and the expressive and imaginative moment of the performance. Her last adventurous performance *Julian* was made in co-operation with a folk dance troupe



Zagreb Dance Company (ZDA): RECOGNITION OF



THE LANDSCAPE

whose dancers brought their own mythology into the performance that is choreographically fragmented. There is an abundance of material with whose origin we are not familiar, but which nevertheless creates a sense of meaning.

One of those who has succeeded in securing his place among distinguished authors of the era is Rajko Pavlić, manager of The Liberdance Company. His last project *The Sun Stopped Gazing at Miracles* grew out of the exploration of the ethnographic dance material. In his project Pavlić successfully related the power of deeply entrenched traditional sensibility with traditions of the contemporary dance expression. The performance is dominated by confidence in rhythm which, in co-operation with composer Stanko Jukić, resulted in such an expression in which the contemporary experience of 'tradition' and tradition of the contemporary dance are combined. Rajko Pavlić is a choreographer who repeatedly shows an increasingly deep interest in improvisation as part of the process of rehearsing. Still, his performances seem as spatial-visual-energetic strategies conditioned by the high quality as well as competence of the performers whom Pavlić was looking for even among ballet dancers.

Dance companies and projects

There are two dance companies that are the backbone of the Croatian dance production – Zagreb dance company (ZDA) and 'The Contemporary Dance Studio' (GSP). During the period of these decades many important performers and authors of the local dance scene have participated in the companies' rehearsals and performances.

In the nineties, under the guidance of Sijedra Abramović, ZDA turned to foreign choreographers trying, on the one hand,

to professionalise the dance scene and enable dancers to develop in co-operation with foreign education authors, and trying to raise standards of production according to the experiences of a wider dance context on the other.

Therefore there were several performances in their production that marked the mainstream of Croatian dance, but also changed the image of what quality performance is.

The first significant project was made in co-production with the Catalan dance company *Luzerner's Imperial*, entitled *Recognition of landscape*. It is a complex dance production with several strategic levels of meaning. Working with a combined group of both his own and local performers, Juan Carlos García created a performance which, perhaps most impressively, reflected the experience of war and hopelessness, i.e. the actual environment in which he was working. *Trouble area* became the landscape of García's performance – a changing cartography, an image dissolving space and reducing the essential precisely in order to show the essential. The map of his performance, which brings the natives back into relationships diffused in the actual space, was a renewal of the landscape. Not trying to impose any personal interpretations of devastated and war-tattered environment, both subjective and objective, García offered a reminder of the place where the performers lived, the place which became part of his own daily record. The following production was a choreography by Beñito Lloja, a dancer of *Luzerner's Imperial*, entitled *Camaderes de solitude*, which contains enervative Latin matrices. This production indicated ZDA's orientation towards the style which is dominant in productions based on 'release techniques'. But the most significant result of the performance was a new generation of dancers, whose determination to pursue their dancing careers as well as



Series: DAFONT 55



over great professional competence made it clear they could not be bypassed in future dance production. This was also confirmed by the most significant production of the ensembles – the performance *Cow Luciano Sacred Oppiano* directed by Ruzay Teran from Venezuela. The choreography was performed by Jelena Vuknerica, Aleksandra Jorova, Nikola Bujan and Prædian Daskalovic.

The usual clichés about dance, as a masterly skill of, exclusively, a choreographer working with technically well equipped dancers, were broken down by the project which developed through improvisations of every single performance. This was an exceptionally challenging and demanding performance based on tensions ranging from revolt, hysteria to pleasure, and characterized by power of expression as well as by extraordinary optimism towards art. Although it could be said that the author's conceptual approach is the trademark of the performance, it would be difficult to detach ourselves from capacity and potential of the performers, who are the backbone of that performance. It is precisely these performers who ensure the final result of the performance, since the entire dance structure is based on controlling and relieving their bodies of hysteria.

SSP also had significant productions made in co-operation with foreign choreographers, among which the Slovene choreographer Matjaž Flanč should be singled out for his

performance *Stranely and I*. Although the performance came about from a conventional understanding of the boundary line between dance and acting, it was a rare attempt to connect the two contexts which are radically disconnected in Croatian performing arts. SSP's other performances are also characterized by a narrative organization of dance material, for instance, the performance *Big Is Beautiful*. The important role of the authors and dancers who are gathered around the SSP includes production of dance performances for children. These very transparent and popularizing performances, choreographed by Desanka Vranić, are among the most popular children's shows in Croatia.

Dance companies have continuously reflected the conditions of performing potentials on the Croatian dance scene, insofar as under the term dancing scene we refer to those authors and performers who have continuously been working and performing in Croatia. Although dance companies have been supported inadequately, still they provide occasional educators, sufficient but indispensable fees and at least some opportunities for a continuous work at the studio, which they share according to the contract with The ZoricaM Theatre. A major drawback for both dance companies (the ZPA and SSP) is their lack of confidence in their own personnel as potential authors,



OSP: THIS IS BLAUNTEL

which resulted in the fact that, during the last ten years, not a single significant production has been put together in participation with younger Croatian choreographers. Croatian choreographers in their prime, who worked in these dance companies, not only established their own periods, already well known from the eighties, but also encountered various problems as a consequence of attempting to pass literary influences onto dance. Undoubtedly a new generation of dancers has emerged within the two dance companies, and should the companies' strategy as well as the cultural politics in Croatia support these dancers, they could very well become the exponents of our dance scene. There are the names that are being associated with all important dancing productions in Croatia today: Aleksandra Janina, Larisa Lipović, Nikolaia Bujas, Ana Junit, Jelena Vukmanica, Zrinka Lukčić, Andreja Štoks, Tamara Čard, Pravičan Đevlatović and Bojan Valentić.

The red-reddies crisis of Croatian dance had an impact on a heterogeneous group of authors, under the name of **LINKST dance project**, who gathered round a homogeneous idea - to promote Croatian dance. In their occasional appearances the unpredictable group of authors would break through conventions of the settled and well-established system of production. Regularly, until now, LINKST took the opportunity to present their dance performances under the sponsorship of the International Dance Day¹ celebration. In the course of time, however, the group presented several independent and more complex projects. Definitely the most interesting choreographer in the group is Iva Renna Gatti whose idea of movement is based on the research of the androgyny, the dance that

goes beyond the categories of male and female. The choreographies of Iva Renna Gatti seem like fragments shown outside the rehearsed organized presentation, so to speak, as objects exposed to one's gaze. Further on, her choreographies have been avoiding the market completely, and it could be said that her reputation rests largely on expression rather than on spectacle. Therefore she takes an active part in site-specific projects, which, however, is not a sufficient evidence of one's existence.

There are two other choreographers who realize and present their choreographies under the **LINKST project**: Ljiljana Zagorec and Karla Šeremet. The former's explorations of dance are based on movement being framed into geometrically objective space, while the latter's choreographies are, in most cases, literary models actualized through associative processes.

A fulltime dancer at Philippe Decoulet's dance company, Irena Šeremet, has also been presented by **LINKST**, and next year she intends to make her all-owning choreography debut. A crucial role in professional training of the entire generation of dancers was played by a French choreographer Klara Gremova, who is now the manager of The Croatian National Ballet Theatre in Split. Klara Gremova first started working as a professional educator at dance companies in Zagreb, and afterwards she founded The Dance Centre Albena, which has been educating new dancers continually in such a way as to organize workshops with guest educators from abroad.

Under the guidance of Hilda Žager and Radimir Stopanović, "The Croatian Movement And Dance Institute (HMDI) has played an undoubtedly important role organizing several



influential projects. The most significant and long-lasting project is: The Dance Week Festival¹ where the most prominent events on the contemporary dance scene have been presented for the past twenty years, both in Croatia and abroad.

In the nineties, HPP took the initiative in educating dancers and established The Moving Academy for Performing Arts Zagreb² which, however, suffered a debacle due to the fact that it has been recognized neither by Croatian lawmakers nor by the professional home scene. The most relevant results the project has achieved so far, belong to the sphere of mime theatre which has become very popular both with the audience as well as with performers. However, there are numerous problems that mime theatre encounters today – conceptualized as the most spontaneous of all performing arts, mime has been transformed into a very limited art in terms of expression which actually gets results only on the metaphorical level of understanding behaviourism. Today HPP has taken an important initiative in instituting The National Centre Of Dance³ whose project has been defined precisely by the exponents of the dancing scene, and whose realization is expected to occur in the near future with support of the Ministry of culture and the City of Zagreb.

This year a new 'Festival of dance and moving theatre' has been set up in Croatia and it takes place in a culturally highly developed region of Istria, since there has been a need for the relocation of dancing projects from Zagreb. This festival is one of the few successful dance projects outside Zagreb, whose aim is to try to solve the constant problems of diffusion of dance in Croatia. With respect to this, Rajko Pivko, whom we have already mentioned, plays an important role in organizing summer workshops in Pula under the guidance of young Croatian dancing educators

Should it happen...

Should Croats really get to national dance centre, great new possibilities would open up for continuous work of both choreographers as well as dancers. It would enable them to explore the problems that, until now, they have been trying to solve only in terms of the 'fixed' terminology of theatre studies.

There are certain indications that the new generation of dancers could give rise to a new generation of choreographers. Among those from whom much is expected, are certainly Inna Omerzo, Ksenija Čorić-Zec, Janina Visconti (who dances in Basel for the time being), Ivana Müller (who continuously works in Amsterdam) and Marija Šekulic (who recently returned from her schooling in Canada). New works are also expected from Emil Matešić, after the appearance of his successful twenty-minute choreography 'Darkness', which lost its charge in the expanded all-evening performance of the same title. Although in the mid-nineties Matešić raised a lot of dust in the dancing circles, unfortunately, until now, his performances have been out of keeping with his rugged ambition. Two choreographers, Nanda Lutendi and Barbara Povlašić, who have already participated in several international productions, are also expected to appear with somewhat more consistent and more analytical choreographies in years to come. Another thing that has been heralded are new performances of young choreographers who are gathered around three new projects: an independent group 'Gleba', artists co-operation B&D co. and Dance Centre BALA. The revival of the dance scene in Split, where Miroslav Čremoza works now, is also to be expected. In the future, Croatian dance has to take several important steps that would help it to turn to the environment from which it emerges. If it should become accepted by society and the cultural milieu, dance may, after all, prove itself to be neither an art visiting Croatia nor an art performed exclusively by visiting dancers. (Translated by Sandra Pivko)

Sandra Pivko Prizmić is a dramaturgist, director and editor-in-chief of Prizmić.

A blurry, black and white photograph of a person in motion, possibly a dancer or athlete, with a text overlay. The person is wearing a light-colored top and dark pants. The background is dark and out of focus.

space

90s

Jelks/ Krasinski: "DIRECTION STUDY", stage design, Emma Lazarus



within them. Contemporary deliberations engage in principal realizations between these elements by analysing archetypal theatrical constructions, i.e. by constructing the scene detached from the fixed prospect of a picturesque stage, or according to Kessler, *Guckkastenbühne* (fourth-wall stage). It is not only the internal space organization, its visual quality and rhythm that is important, but also the possibilities of changing and manipulating its boundaries. Theatre escapes the rigidity imposed by the resemblance to the illusionistic stage whose content, i.e. area covering the action, is determined by its frame.

The frame of a unidirectional and fixed point of view, then the frame of the Italian box, its archaic authority and symbolic value within theatre all develop into motifs in Goran Sergey Petroski's production *Confessions*. There is a question of one's own acting space that arises up as a dramaturgical guideline, further pursued in Goran Petroski's stage design. In the first part of *Confessions*, acting takes place primarily on the proscenium, while the background of the stage is covered by a large screen. The whole of that area and the actors, who are out of audience's sight, are partially being filmed and

screened in a stroboscopic technique. During the whole of the first part of the production, the actors in front of the screen have no relation, whatsoever, to the contents displayed on the screen. The camera, for instance, follows the movements of a dancer, enclosed in the back of the Italian box. Maximum space is being halved and separated, but both parts remain visible, although extant in two different presentational forms. Their first encounter occurs on the body of a dancer, who appears on the rim of the proscenium: she is visible from the auditorium, filmed and screened, but still only from the back. The integral body dances not only between two frames, but also between two spaces, whose differentiation is determined by the observation point. The obstacle to the rear part of the stage is not removed before the second part of the production, which is based on the deconstruction of the performing elements. Strict staging is seemingly being replaced by improvisation and coincidence, and by covering up of the whole stage, the Italian box area finally appears. At that moment, the theatre frame becomes the field, on which the stage dramaturgy emphasizes the already begun examination through dimensions, meanings and possibilities of the acting space given. Petroski



1. Buljan, "RETURN TO THE DESERT", stage design: Steven Tolj



2. S. Petrol, "CONFIDENTIAL", stage design: Goran Petrol

projects, onto that frame, a photograph of gilded stucco work that builds up a frame of the Italian box of the Croatian National Theatre. The space renders itself as a subject referring both to the mine context of the death of the play acted and to the fragileness of its structure, to the burden of aesthetics and norms imposed upon it through history. Instead of closing the space with set pieces and instead of redecorating it, Petrol approaches the space as a potential, charged with ever new meanings, whereby the set designer's task would be to find and recognize the method that would make this apparent. Set designing refers not only to the contents of the production and movements of the performing bodies, but also to the wider context of the performance, and its cultural and institutional features.

Every new theatre space is a land of new territory that imposes upon each production not only the frames measured in square metres, but also all sorts of artistic orders securing aesthetic and cultural uniqueness of the theatre. Recognition of these givens provides a new frame one could refer to. Steven Tolj's set design for the *Return to the Desert* production, directed by Ivo Buljan, represents an example of as ironic distance from the visual attractiveness, monumentality and local neopolitistic position of the Croatian National Theatre in Split. Tolj's simplified set design functioned as an aesthetic antipode to the theatre's architecture. At the same time, the opening of a curtain curtain functioned as an act of irony, since on the stage there were only a derided truck and a house cut in two. Kotlić's text on hypocrisy and cretins of provincialism has found shape on the stage: a petty bourgeois home without walls, audience playing a self-critical role of voyeurs, and moreover, the cultural context of a city desperately fighting provincialism. Naturally, these sorts of information networking on and off the stage

bear relevance only in case when both the viewer and the author belong to the same sign-recognition system, and are aware of the ideological and critical potentials, brought by every spatial intervention.

In the next of Buljan's productions, the Kotlić's monologue *A Night at the Edge of the Wood*, Tolj communicates again with the performance space, although this time he does not engage in aesthetic confrontations, but radically narrows borders by different use of lights and organization of auditorium. The audience enters the amorphous, dark room and take seats on the benches semicircularly set in front of a wall onto which the bluish light, representing the window glass, is cast. The actor, poured down with water, stands there leaning against the wall, literally forced to the rectangular frame of the light cast. The audience's range of vision is also restricted, they haven't got a choice, except for the claustrophobic latitude of a light space, producing an agonizing effect of confinement. When during the curtain call the light is cast over the whole theatre, the space ten times bigger opens up the vacuum that was gaping in the darkness, while the performance was taking place on just a couple of square metres. It is also possible to fill in the frames of a specific spatial potential with poetic meanings. This is the case in most of the set designing solutions of Miroslav Sekulić, a set designer who in the 1990s collaborated with Paolo Magelli in most of his productions of classic Russian authors, such as Chekhov and Turgenev, as well as in his most recent projects, *Ali, Nora, Nora* and *Kristina's Karma*. In the context of getting a broader perspective of Croatian theatre, the role Sekulić played is it could be compared to that of Paolo Magelli. They introduced high-ranking aestheticians, taking the non-existing place of acknowledged authors coming from large theatres, and assume the necessity for large theatrical companies and

I. Rubin: "ARTSCENE", stage designer: Gertje Polverini



P. Magelli: "ESPRESSO", stage designer: Miriam Schmitt





P. Magelli: "TRI SEGRETI", stage design: Tihomir Milosavljević

organization of their stage presentation, i.e. the necessity for the stage construction of both the ambience and that ambience-quality that is capable of turning the stage into a landscape of symbols, a psychological stimulus and that is being inscribed in an contextualist manner into the mood of the performance acted. The set organization is solved by emptying the stage, so that later it would expand up to its limits, within which the mise-en-scène surface covered in materials such as sand, maize or sawdust is brought about. The reduction in set pieces leaves enough room for bodies within the space liberated from inner obstacles, so that at the same time its gaping vastness nurtures dramatic situations, which acting refers to. The set designing impressionism is supported by the same aesthetic code of a drama-pattern. The intended stage space is subordinated to the play, and in its ambience quality the narratives take place parallelly, thus creating a subtle cacophony of lines and images. The transparency of the illusion, however, is constantly present on bare theatre walls, and as such, it inscribes itself into the contents of the play, in which the frames, i.e. the limit denoting the impossibility of change, represents the tragic reality of the dramatic personae.

The space itself becomes in this way a dramatic character, who evolves with regard to other dramatic personae, and with regard to interrelations of other theatre elements, as well as to the observations and expectations of the viewers themselves. Its organization directs bodily movements, whose three-dimensionality constitutes the base for deliberating constitutive elements that set up the performance limits together with frames, within which the performer in action is moved.

Tihomir Milosavljević is the most frequent collaborator of the

B. Brezovc: "ISO 90", stage design: Tihomir Milosavljević



Croatian cult director, Branko Brezovc (So So; Bacchanale; Emma, Essays etc...). The part he plays in set designing represents, actually, an attempt of a vocal montage of a formal system of signs and intertextual layers, that emerge as a result of deciphering Brezovc's productions, alongside with which the set designer follows the director's logic: he insists on space dynamics taking it up to its limits, he constructs movable set constructions that can be taken apart, he covers surfaces with showings, and transforms the stage organism by constructing and deconstructing the already made fractals. Milosavljević's interventions are not to be regarded only from the visual or functional point of view, but also through the necessity of their visual contextualization as fields of intermediality. His space represents a form of ever transforming action, and by its structure and signs inscribed, it affects the dynamics of bodies existing within it. It is constituted from the need to interact with the world, i.e. with the audience and their, social, art and cultural foreknowledge.

The borders of stage territory are turned upside down into a borderless space, and by comparing them, the dramaturgical context of a production is constructed (Petarović, Lapačić). They serve as assumptions for creating irony and indignation against aesthetic symbols representing a particular institution (Žold), they intensify the unrestrictedness and involvement with different positions from which the space is filled in (Milosavljević). Finally, the territorial frames are being personified into an active protagonist (Šekulić). The space studies by, essentially, specialising upon itself!

(Translated by Iva Čadež)

Irena Šajko is a dramaturgist, writer and a member of editorial board of Prolog.



performance

outlines of a sliding area

written by
 author's name

[illegible][illegible]

language, behavior, speaking and acting, the
irregularity and singularity of play and the social, bodily
ways of a context and in the same fashion a location for
projecting the observer's wishes, before introducing physical
phenomena does not guarantee truth, and generally the
effects of inter-subjective phenomena of meaning require
For several decades, the performance and speech
Johannes Oelander have been challenging the boundaries
of the body, especially naked body, and its position in
diversities of varying political contexts. His
performances of the quotidian gain a political, everyday
performing in public spaces. His work is characterized
by a heightened awareness of life and of "how things"
that of existence at art, as he explains it in his reflective
formal-polemical "Art is One after the other and
transforms the same problem." The thought's cannot
left art from side. It is at the margin of life, perhaps that
his greatest problem. What would life and the eternal
struggle for a future is like, for food, to work every
day is to live, to believe, for it always have something,
something that work, noon, lunch, night - every day
again, how to survive this globalized time of time?
increased more convinced that no one should believe
the life art any more." (Interview 2005, 2008, 1994)
The merging of life and art, also a single problem, can
only be observed in living periods of life, as artists
works (e.g. after school, during a job 1956 - 1967,
while in education 1967 - 1995). The figure as political
model with the artistic model view Art, which
increases his entire creative practice. Part of a
deconstructed learning, but the same time questions
with a work period, by structural means, a concept, a
form, and a social relationship network of about 25
years in an interdisciplinary German Federal - Federal
and Art or art spaces, finding out the question of
the role of education, which emphasizes the
interdisciplinary work, and the work of 1995, then a

FBI



RETROSPEKTIVA DOKUMENTATA

1995 - 1999

Tomislav Gotovac: PIRANHA, VIEW ART, EDA

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**TOMISLAV
GOTOVAC**

1940 - 2017

galerija

1000 SQUARE
Park Plaza, Valencia, CA



artistic device "exposition booklet, Gallery DDB, Zagreb, 1988) The question of the individual's freedom in a given space-temporal frame, which Gotovac has been developing as an aggressive gesture imposing its own obsessive idea to the world around it, in the nineties no longer refers to a totalitarian politics of a given regime, but to the all-encompassing global functioning. His performance *Adjusting to the Objects on the Maršal Tito Square* (1997) aims precisely at the tyranny of the quotidian and the violence of the environment. The two-hour action began at noon, as Gotovac's actions and performances, directional disciplines in which he is the director, protagonist and producer, often do. Dressed as a workman's overall, with Howard Hawks embroidered on the back (his usual practice of dedicating works to great filmmakers), Gotovac systematically goes around the Maršal Tito Square adjusting his body to the architectural shapes and the inventory of the Square: Maršalović's Fountain of Life, the railings, the pavement, the steps, the benches. The Square named after the character Gotovac deal with in

a series of performances *Hommage to Jean Brou Tibo* (1990) - consisting of the simple acts of Reading the Papers, Listening to the Radio, Watching Television, Telephoning, and problematizing the relationships of global direction of information consumption - is treated in this performance as a site of architectural coercion. On this Square the national theatre building is located, as well as a university building and a museum - all key institutions of the hegemonic culture and education - and at the same time it is a scene of everyday dress imposed by the proscribed lines of movement, uses of the inventory, prescribed actions, obeying borderlines and property. The tricks in the art of doing Michel de Certeau speaks of, which enable individuals subject to global restrictions of the modern, especially urban, society to avoid them, creating their own environment and ways through various cunning strategies, are radically individualized in Gotovac's work. The body systematically exploring the borders of objects and movement, inscribing them in itself and forcing viewers to follow it, takes over

Klasična zlog antičakoladna djelatnost. Plućna i vjerna u Zagrebu 1962. Stariši u krevetu smrti. 27 godina

Sanja Končar: 029 500

dragica končar

100



the function of cultural production. His performances in the registers (e.g., *Lyng Naked on the Tarmac*, 1983; or *The Exhibitionist Performance / Displaying the Gestalt*, 1989) politicise individuality in a totalitarian society which does not acknowledge it, while in the movies Gotovac tries to escape the terror of choosing individually conceived either as so many average individuals or as the mean average of the individuals. For decades, Gotovac worked from a mid-position, first as the avant-garde of the so-called new artistic practice of the '70s, a part of which he eventually becomes, then as the link with a younger generation of artists. In 1996 he works in a group for the first time, on the project *Weekend Art: Hallelujah the Hill*. The project consists of Sunday excursion to the Sijene hilltop, a mythical site for Croatian conceptual art ever since the days of Gorgona and Kotanić's land art idea *Carving the Hilltop* (1968). Tomislav Gotovac and Ivana Keiser act out the performance which has been going on from 1996, while Aleksandar Ilić is the director, participant, organiser and producer. Appropriating the imposed and turning it into one's own advantage, finding the trick in the art of doing which characterises Gotovac's performance *Adjusting to the Objects on the Maršal Tito Square*, is realised in the *Weekend Art* project as a political gesture twisting the pejorative sense of the Sunday artist in the circumstances of transitional impoverishment and unacceptable political surroundings, opening up the possibility of avoiding the dictates of social and political context. An interest in thinking through one's own position in the system of the labour market, i.e. defining the co-ordinates of values and meanings of artistic work in a

broader social structure by means of documenting Sunday excursions into the countryside, challenges the co-optation of leisure and working hours, positioning them in a single field of the fluctuation of capital. The performance of Sunday excursions, presented on the Internet, as a series of postcards or as slide projections in a gallery, demonstrates a strong interest in the processes of documenting and distributing, and in the transformations of the work in various media, distancing it completely from the imperative of the physical presence of the body as a guarantee of authenticity. The tension between performance and its media presentation has been explored by Sanja Iveković from the early seventies. Her performances often include video technology or are realised as private acts documented on videotape and made public through being displayed in a gallery. In the nineties, the artist deals in the media in the action *Goti XX*, which consists of publishing photographs of famous models, accompanied by the name of a female hero from World War II, the year of her execution and her age at the time of death, in various magazines. The problem of collective amnesia with a reference to recent past is developed in the performance *Repetito est mater*, not media-treated but adopting the existing medium, the letters which women fighters in the Partisan resistance movement wrote in captivity. These women were hailed as war heroes under socialism and forgotten in the nineties. The performance is based on immediate bodily presence, on the experience shared by the audience and the artist, as she transcribes, word for word, the text of the letter projected on the wall. The text, completely



Šezlong (sunshade) at the festival

illegible at first, is gradually opened up to meaning through re-writing, becoming inscribed in the common present from which it has been erased.

The line of development of the media mediation of performance is expressed in a particular way in the works of a number of younger artists who associate performance, action and body art exclusively with certain ways of media presentation. The video works of Alan Florić can thus be read as edited documents of a performance for the camera. A particular emphasis on the body as a live organic object, reduced to basic bodily functions of simple belching or breathing, Florić edits a poor image of his own body repeating the same movement more like an organism and less like a body. The sliding of body art into exclusively digital recording treats the body as something perceived by the means of representation, thus becoming a social construct the physical existence of which is fading. In the nineties the artists again pay attention to the fact that we are prisoners of our physical existence, which is particularly pronounced in the performances of the Dubrovnik artists Slaven Tolj and Bobo Jurjević. Slaven Tolj's performance *Food for Survival* (1993), in which the artists paints his body and that of his female partner in the nourishing mass of humanitarian aid, which they then lick off one another, is directly contextualised in the siege of Dubrovnik. The performances of Bobo Jurjević included danger, risk and physical suffering of the artist, not a prominent feature in Croatian performing art. In *Eclipse* (1997), the artist is strapped to Kofman's sculpture



Bobo Jurjević, A. Tolj, E. Kofman, *PERFORMING ART*

Landed Sun in Bogovčić Street, from which he painfully and in vain tries to free himself. The mythic character of pointless effort seems more like an agitation than an act of resignation in the context of public performance. Disassociating oneself from the tradition of conceptual artistic practice and its reception, as pointed out by Kofman's repeatedly moved and destroyed sculpture, becomes in Jurjević's performance an act the very futility of which demands repeated new efforts. The practice of Croatian performance art in the nineties moves in the same context of repeatedly redrawn boundaries of tradition.

(Translated by Tomislav Brčić)

Metastasis III in an art installation.

A black and white photograph of a person holding a megaphone. The person is on the left, wearing a light-colored shirt, and the megaphone is held up towards the center-right. The background is a textured, light-colored wall. Overlaid on the image is a white rectangular box containing the text "out of instructions" in a bold, sans-serif font.

out of instructions

dr. inat in the alternative theatre of the nineties

written by
senara marjanek

ideology is neither good nor bad in itself
It all depends on the moment we endorse it
Lina M. Goren

Once upon a time; or, the beginnings of the alternative theatre in the theatre of war

An unfinished, probably never-ending, and uncertain story of the (visual) alienation (dis)unity of the (re)acted, and (re)acted (re)acted, the opinion of Branka Suljac on what the (re)acted alternative theatre really means today, which he has managed to state in a single sentence, "However, to really engage with the alternative theatre, though I am not quite sure I know what it is anymore, means to have one's feet, like through everything and keep on working."¹ Let us go back to the beginning of my sentence - the beginning of a fairly un-pleasant chronology of the Croatian alternative theatre could be marked by the Postcards - (Dječji) (23rd June - 14th July 1991), where, after the red car was run over by a tank, the participants of the real theatre became the audience for the beginning of the theatre of war.² The epoch recognized itself in theatre and, even more importantly, theatre recognized itself in the current epoch: the ongoing events seemed at the time well-organized and chaotic. There was nothing that could stop the ongoing performance of politics and war.³ Montefalco and their performance Rap Opera 101 have been selected for the off-programme of Eurokaz in the first war year, and the profits were offered to the Croatian army. Other collections from the Croatian alternative theatre exist: The Studio for Realistic and Figurative Sculpture, The Line of Lined Resistance & Ivana Popović with Current Board, the theatre company Poked with

Manjet Bluford, and the Scared Griefs with the choreo-performance Sharp Dines. Within the delirium of the war reality, two theatre signs - the golden kalashnikov from Rap Opera 101 and the Current bombs of Ivana Popović - penetrated the context of war. In Rap Opera 101 - which was made using the Philoctetes myth and the biography of the constructor M.T. Kalashnikov, Philoctetes/Kalashnikov/Pharos is being waited in a golden wheelchair, for the pure society is founded on the mentally handicapped.

The Current Bomb production/performance establishes the relationship with a hateful time in which the first (unfortunately not current) masculine bombs were about to start falling. I must, however, notice that the theatre's service of the GLB has by many been understood as a childish fairy tale. I have, as I usually do with fairy tales, taken it all too seriously, which has probably been induced by the cold breakthrough I felt during the Postcards, which regardless of its name had started before (unlike) While the rehearsal of Rap Opera 101 represented the nesting place of a harmless man, since contagious thought represents the most dangerous disquiet, the artwork's sake confiture bombs were conceived as the gingerbread hearts of the national myth symbolism. Their art comes out of delinquencies, since beautiful industrial cakes, baked by neo-classic, have no taste. As the confiture business is going down, the cakes are exhibited in a gallery and the bees become the most famous pop art sculptures - in politics, as a kitchen without any flavour, the bomb becomes a verbal whigpoet.

¹ "Kazalište kao jedna odrednica" interview with Branka Suljac, *Artista*, Director of PGP, June 14 - 15th July 2000 p. 34.

² "Sveučilište u Zagrebu" magazine publication across Slavonia (BVPZ) Young Theatre Festival 2 - Postcards, (July 1991).

³ "Kazalište kao jedna odrednica" interview with Branka Suljac, *Artista*, Director of PGP, June 14 - 15th July 2000 pp. 3-13. Question p. 4.



of the post-war 'reconstruction discourse'²⁵ and of a potential apocalypse of peace. *State of the Moon* and *Macbeth* productions were also staged at the Eurokaz festival the same year. Gaga Grotan expressed her wonder at the fact that Gaska was not there with the 'mythifying' *Waiting for Godot*. 'The audience, unfortunately, did not see *Waiting for Godot*, God knows why' *Wprost* 40, 120 July 1993, p. 271.

War and Post-war Neoliberalism

The last scene of *IMAT's Orchestra Rehearsal* (1996), subtitled 'with some help from Fellini and bad dreams' and performed in the Pula shelter, recapitulates the scene on the Odysseus stairs in Eisenstein's *Saltimbanquin*. In the film, the wounded woman, falling, pushes the baby carriage down the stairs, in the performance, the last scene of the orchestra rehearsal is a puppet-like (stiff) entrance of the male figure and a woman with a baby carriage; the family as a small scale state. But the family Trinity is incomplete, there is no baby figure in the carriage. The woman fills it with white death-masks, masks with no individuality, and the carriage is pushed away from the instrumentalised parents. The masks rebel against their makers. A figure dressed in a camouflage uniform, having produced the gun call of the air raid, points the spectators strategically towards the location on which an orchestra rehearsal is to take place. He takes off his camouflage and puts it on some white linen, an act sealing the collective memory image of the blood stained uniform of a Croatian soldier used in the Benetton advertising campaign (concept and photo by Oliviero Toscani)¹², framed by the protective Benetton logo (United Colours of Benetton) ironically inappropriate in our mutilated socio-systemic anti-totalitarian situation and the statement of the dead soldier's father: 'I, Paolo Geron, the father of



multimedia

MAP THE SILENCE OF THE CIGAR

the killed Miroslav Gajdo, born 1963 in Bratislava, Ćruba, agree that my dead son's name be used on a poster as a means of light for peace." The conductor is a "Mephisto in camouflage," who will take over the main role in the gross scene of conducting/performing the fates of the orchestra of robots, trying to create a harmonious rhythm of action in war. War is the decision/tell of the individual and the others (the orchestra) are instrumentalised by the war. The war orchestra leads the call of the beligerent Mephisto. Having taken the camouflage off, he is dressed in a black tie. From a deserted war time into the bourgeois world. He is changing clothes like theatre costumes, according to his topiosition. A black vampire but cape wraps/covers the future orchestra. (the application of biomorphosis marks the first stage of curbing capitalismism). The orchestra as a collective emotional corpse incarnates its desires in Mephisto's cape. When the orchestra starts to follow Mephisto's dissonant conducting, orchestration and instrumentalisation, white death masks appear. It is an act of forming the social, organised body, absorbing individual bodies into its collectivism. Discipline does not count on the crowd, but on the the power of the anchored individuals.¹² Each individual defiance of the instrumentalisation of the ego, every individual's disobedience of the totality of the established orchestra/people playing invisible instruments (they themselves are the instruments), is by means of a surveillance system subject to punishment. The war and post-war Mephisto restores the totalitarian normality by

means of a surveillance structure of unison breathing (the rhythm of breathing, the rhythm of thought). The preparation for equating thoughts with propaganda is secured through the rhythm of their breathing, the rhythm of their body. From sitting upright to playing in tune. Together, the orchestra attempts a return into individuality through speaking their own names and years of age, but every attempt at self-interpretation is contained in the aphasic systems. Ideology has channelled its thought, ideolodicality has been automatised. Ideology is the inscribed, tattooed, coded harmony of thought. When the orchestra leads a possible pleasure in the copied harmony of instrumentalism, the orchestral cabaret-march is created. Bow strings and instruments metamorphose functionally into guns, shouldered arms. "The body is organised as a part of the multisegmented machine." (Foucault, op. cit., p. 168.) A stage oxymoron like that of the cabaret-military march in Bob Fosse's film Cabaret (1972).

While Fellini's orchestra (1978) has a rehearsal in a mediaeval crypt, RAT's orchestra chooses a shelter, where the emanation of the security ideology is magically strong. Fellini's parable on the origins of totalitarian regimes has been organised by RAT into a parable on the origins of national totalitarianism, in which a friend becomes a "friend in ideology."¹³ The conductor as a politician in power catonises the climax of the instrumentalisation of mass psychology of totalitarianism. The acting orchestra becomes the instrumentalisation of hell. Hell is one, like the origin of evil is One. The Criminal

¹² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, London: Pantheon, 1979, p. 214.

¹³ On the "friend superior" see Ulrich Beckford, *Discourse in Society: a contemporary theory*, Oxford: OUP, 1996, p. 208.



(Leader) is one. Politics REALLY is not a result of our (those committed to the alternative political stopped) decisions. The idea of the western political hell, as a totalitarian theatre of power, has been marked, camouflaged metaphorically by the aura of the political lies on high.

Cicadas, red masks and baby carriages

Or INAT states that the choreo-drama *And the Cicadas Fell Silent* is in a certain way a continuation of the *Orchestra Rehearsal*, which questions "the sense of continuing the race and breeding new life which automatically assumes the inherited masks of lies, hypocrisy and evil, accepting passively the shackles of the past and eternal silence." The accompanying booklet further states that the performance speaks of "modern young people, the Cicadas of the world, who have given up the fight and hope." Recalling Plato's linking philosophers with the cicadas in *Phaedrus* and connecting this metaphor with the title of INAT's choreo-drama, the pages of History's cynicism spread open, where the whirlpool of voices of alternative thinkers is hushed, silenced. This work is centred on the image of mothers with baby carriages as an image of the birth rate waited for by the narcissistic state. After looking into the carriages, the mothers drift away in horror from the reflection of the womb protecting the children's faces. Recall the debunking of conspiracy theory in Tom

Golovach's overinterpretation "Beneath the big conspiracy theory there are small conspiracy theories and the tiny conspiracy theories until you reach the family. In the same way, parents fool their children to make them capable of fooling other people."¹⁴ Children's faces will bear the mask of their parents' past, the insulted, anchored mask of the mass painted in the colours of ideology in power. One can only go into the future not fearing the profits of the present in a new life within the baby carriages. After a long look into the womb, the mothers bring out sticky, sodden, pulpy red masks. Putting them on the back of their heads they gain a polyccephalous gaze, the human present face and the red mask of the past at the back of the head. The past carries over into the present burdened by its passions and shapes the future. These are not Jesus' gates of active passage from the past into the present, it is the grafting of legendary long suffering past/history of Great Men on the present. "Ideologies are a by-product and a vulgar expression of messianic utopian visions."¹⁵ When the mask is put on the back of the head, the mothers bleed at the mouth. The dobbing of the mask brings forth the mask's bloody word. After the giving birth scene, red masks are pushed on the faces of mothers as visual metaphors for flayed core flesh. After the surface tattoo, ideology uses contamination and acceleration of anchored thought. The mothers' last gesture is pulling out the chord (cord, metal umbilical cord), which forever ties them to (each make them responsible for) the fate of children. Coating the ties with the embryonal beginnings of human history or an alternative history of projective

¹⁴ Tom Golovach, "Beneath the conspiracy," *Orchestra* 4 (1996), p. 19.

¹⁵ Jean Cohen, *State of Mind*, trans. David Collier, 1990, p. 47.

future – defined by astral antennas, opposing the psychohistory of eternal war cries of (human) mass – are for the time being impossible. And the cocadas fell silent their night silence (passion) embraces also daily action.

Rats come out

In *Post Dreams*, performed at this year's PLUS, Dr. INAT presents the figure of the cyborgnetic blind guide (Šander Sladek), accompanied by a dog for the blind as his prosthesis: army ants, as the figure of a guide through mendacious subtaneities of the former military barracks. Entering from the playground, they fill the subterranean space with sadness and the dead life of a discomolate ghost. In the wake of site specific theatre, Dr. INAT imagines the life of exiles and refugees ungratefully grafted onto the history of the former barracks. According to Branko Sodak: "The barracks have their history of changing masters: they were built by the Austro-Hungarian imperial army, to be replaced by the Italian army, to be ousted by the Yugoslav army, and finally the refugees were placed here as the traces of this war. We entered the barracks after the refugees had left. They were being relocated somewhere else. You can see they were desperate. I found a room where the baby cot was unmade as if the child has just left, scattered toys, clothes, underwear. On top of that, there was a number of rat holes, for when they left, the rats came here. The barracks imposed its own theme and rhythm to the intimate understanding of the world. Masters changed, armies changed, and the institution remained as a symbol of those in power" (Mater 34, 20th July, 2000, p. 34.) Each room in the barracks, where the former cynical powers have inscribed their history, assumes the function of a station in the symbolism of Hell and Purgatory. The spectators walk through visual metaphors of the evil

consequences of life in exile, always defined by spaces of rejection. The politics of pain did not bring any political sense. The first installation of pain within the psychogeography of the barracks represents a bird in a cage, accompanied by the paradoxical cheerful bird song offstage. Then follows the first station with the suicidal act of a woman hanging herself having stepped herself. The second station offers the view of the room in which uniformed parents lie in beds, get up and go to the military metal white beds opposite. In the military beds there are baby dolls. The uniformed parents shake vigorously the bodies of children, instead of rocking them to sleep. (Is refugee children a sole dream of hard coats of childhood and of the sick minds of leadership, which have inscribed their childhood into the barracks of masculine belligerent smells?) The central motif of INAT's non-verbal dramaturgy, performatively inscribed in the backdrop music, are the baby carriages, baby cots symbolising the mode of a woman, soft words. Cradle is connected to "travel, and thus (...) often has the shape of a boat: the uterus sailing or flying and protecting while passing through the world."¹⁸ In the funeral patrol of omnic stations where the painterly imprint of Bojan Šumona's black period is visible, there follows a series of installations of pain: two figures throw metal plates, creating metal-piercing and earth thudding sound, while in front of this noisy upon a speechless scene of recurring takes place: a woman in bed with a skeleton, the bed as an ivy-clad tomb in a room with footsteps offstage, the sink as a toilet seat, the daffies as excrement in a wasteland where the mouth and the anus are interchangeable. The leading motif of bed as tomb symbolises the wasteland of burnt, scorched desires. The patrol through the barracks of the history of power ends in a inner yard, when the ghosts, Foster's Cabinet evergreen Romaner Delago's to Me in the backdrop, are trying to put the shoes of former political

¹⁸ Jean-Claude Lévesque (Shawbourn), *Spoken with Words*, Degrade 92, Malen, Bratislava, 1997, p. 267.



Opening of PUF Festival, 1998

'soul' on the 'old' corpses-dolls as a symbol of a utopian change. Or, in the words of Branko Salac, emphasising the symbolism of funeral shoes that can be worn only by cleansed souls, 'Shoe symbolises the voyager. A voyager walking through the world. All of us, waking, walking and disappearing. We are trying to put the shoes on those drowned rats to move on.' (Zarez 34, 20th July 2000, p. 34.) The final framing scene is presented as the shutting of the gates after the prophetic blind-guide has passed through them, his passage through the gates indicates that from behind the promised pink dreams erupts the black reality of political deadness with the coming shadows of the past and the destroyed landscapes/fates of the living.

Towards the end: the subcult theatre

The first FAK (Festival of Alternative Theatre Expression) took place in 1998 and like Branko Salac a PUF it proclaims the initiative to act and states in the first person: in its manifesto what was available to them in the context of SAJZ: 'a rather conservative understanding of the theatre and with accompanying non-artistic features of the programme.' Though they have performed on various Croatian festivals, including Eurokaz, they still 'lack (...) either a sensible (if not subversive) theatre expression or the ADA diploma.'¹² The fourth PUF (1998) included performances by Latin Art Express and the Autonomous Culture Factory (ATTACK), the latter comprising some cellmates of the First FAK. The fans will undoubtedly remember the exterior live installation *Feed* performed by the performance art group *No Package* and lasting eight hours, an allusion to the eight-hour working hours. The location, near the tree in front of the hotel Dubrovnik, included a black man-doll in a yellow net, indicating a stage story of the holistic unity of tree and Man, networked into his own apocalyptic fate, prophetically

defined in Elia's 'net story' (*The Waste Land*). The Scherzo theatre action 20% was aimed against the state imposed tax on books and intended to provoke by stealing the Knowledge inaccessible on the market, at the Algoritm bookstore. However, a more subversive expounding of the truth about the tax was given triumphantly by Filip Belić, one of the untamed members of the non-conformist performance group The United Balkans Inc., who refuses to be a member of the tamed and egalitarian herd of affiliate artists.

One year after the first FAK, the group PROM from Osijek organised, in collaboration with ATTACK, the Festival of Young Alternative Artists *Plig in Qi* (11-14 November 1999), begun by the 'beats alert.' The festival opened in the early morning hours by installing 69 metal flags with the inscription 'mimes' in the Peter Peradošić promenade in Osijek. The police was informed; rioters were planted in the area and the police squads arrived, prompted especially by the information that 'there is a bomb in the apartment of the governor of Berenja, Branimir Glavač' (Medernj list 12.8.1999, p. 18). We are thus back at the beginning of our story of the Croatian alternative theatre of the weary newbies. (Translated by Tomislav Brlek and Iva Čorić)

Societas Internationalis in a Moment



alternatives

80s



radio.active



"Living in a Disco"

At the beginning of new wave period in pop music, that loss of cultural autonomy is best expressed by the piece "Pop Music", a hit of the anonymous group M in 1979, which on the synthetic beat by means of a monotonous technocratic voice exposes the key problems: " New York, London, Paris, Munich, everybody talks about pop music" - the global omnipresence - of new disco dance, but at the same time also a debate of non-personal, anonymous centres of interest; "Scupper with a subbase" - the movement of information, culture into the model of what up to yesterday was called production lines; "we are living in a disco, forget about the rat race" - bringing rhythm into life, the loss of sacred cultural status, its integration into everyday life; a feeling of the impossibility of an escape from the strictly given space.

As the pop critic of "Polet", Tomstar Weiss puts it: The high position of that song on the list of best singles in 1979 is the then central subject of taste determining, the NME, and the stylistic and thematic correspondence in pieces of 'established' groups, are legitimizing "Pop music" as a significant expression of issues of the new wave. It is indicative that precisely a group belonging to the anonymous world of pop music top lists, and not the individualist world of author rock music, was the first to feel the new situation in which pop music had found itself. A moment of truth took place in an instant song of a group doomed to being forgotten, and not to being remembered in rock history or a rock encyclopaedia. Besides it is a disco piece of music.

Consequently, if a pop music "the alternative" used to be formally determined as a counterpart of a type of music versus another type of music (eg. punk vs. sympho-rock), and later, with the new wave, structurally - which has all been published by the independent (the so called "indie") companies like Factory with Joy Division/New Order, Rough Trade with The Smiths, Mute with Depeche Mode,

4 A.D. with The Cocteau Twins... no matter what type of sound and commercial success is the alternative to what is being published by big corporations like EMI, RCA, CBS... Towards the end of the 80s "the alternative" remains a matter of pure capitalist competition within the free enterprise system. Thus even a pop music which in Bowie put it ("When in doubt, blame Bowie.") was always ten years late in comparison to the other artistic areas, "definitely" there has been a breakdown of the extremely modernist ideology. Every ideological charge of the 'alternative' of any kind has been whitened. The notion 'indie' has in that way definitely become an introduction to industry and not an element of difference. Really, we are living in a disco, and the 90s have precisely confirmed it on the market by the expansion of techno/house scene, by their all night rave parties, mass happenings like Love Parade, music that emphasizes rhythm and provides in which the boundaries of a particular song in a line are disappearing, and the original version itself is being replaced by a remix series.

XXXX

The notion of the alternative/alternatives has thus been destroyed from two sides: the contemporary media/culture industry is swallowing even the most radical artistic expressions without a single problem (body art, pornography, SM, body cutting, plastic operations - as in case of Body radicals: Chris, Stefan, Ron Athey, Franko B, Anne Sprinkle...) colonizing the "alternatives", which is on the other hand becoming part of the mainstream. Those who have so far been on the margins have become stars and the whole so called alternative / independent or marginal production/scene is acting according to the same principles as the dominant cultural industry, with its institutions, stars, media, mechanisms of promotion. While the classic modernist art was opposing society, challenging, critical, acting negatively

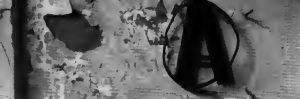


frequently is a subversion or at least in the manner of an opposition even in cases it was aesthetic to the utmost, it was always striving to something above the pure aestheticism; the question is whether such a thing could be said about the contemporary production. The production of goods, marketing, consuming, commercial success – comprise everything – from ethnic music up to marginal sexual practice. Whether in form or its contents, there is very little in contemporary art that the modern late capitalist society could think of as unacceptable, unbearable, offending, or scandalous... Each particular form, style, or sort or expression is understood only as goods meant for a group with a certain aim.

The critics would add that in a practical sense the notion of "the alternative/alternative culture" has not only been surpassed and unnecessary, but also that the notion itself is ready to be put away into the remnants of history because it insists on a domain where a diversity is needed. The illusion of non-antagonistic Society presents a global "container" in which there is room enough for the whole range of cultural communities, styles of life, religions, sex directions. But within the variations of life styles, in the glorified tolerance-cultural, ethnic, religious, sexual, (...) of diversity in the multicultural ideology, is there not a hidden danger of an One, dominant, of something that is out of question, and that is a global and omnipresent logic of capital. Is the very Oneness, the common field within which all sorts of identities are growing, not already supported by certain exclusions, is it not leaving on a certain invisible, negated, antagonistic breach. Isn't this "diversity" in itself – starting with the so called ethnic kitchens that are disposable to the consumer in a contemporary city up to the illusion of the governing liberal dose about specific identity market on which any subject can freely and with full consciousness choose among a number of subjective positions/roles, that one can freely choose and continuously change – isn't it only

the other side of a general global unification where the political freedoms are substituted by free market, and the individual freedom, freedom of man and citizen is put to a common denominator of taking his choice between two competitive market signs – Coke or Pepsi? In case we want the alternative notion to keep any sense at all in this society of spectacular globalisation, when all styles are permitted, or if we want it to acquire some new meaning and be productive, we have to understand it in a deeply political way: not connect it to the traditional issues of aesthetics but to the basic social antagonisms. Culture/cultural production can nowadays be an alternative not by its new, different, unusual form or expression manner – but also exclusively in a political way. The alternative cannot be defined by means of a series of specific excellences of contents or form, i.e. those qualities are not in themselves "alternative", but they have become such by their specific articulation into a definite – radical – politically/ideological project. This is culture/art that does not consider the existing relation of domination and power as steady, petrified and unchangeable, as something that could not be influenced. In spite of the postmodern theory of love towards trash aesthetics, the so called trash literature, the world of B-movies, Las Vegas, pornography and radical sexuality not even a short while ago despised, and nowadays a completely integrated world of popular mass culture is not in itself "subversive" or "self-negated", it is such only when it questions its own positions by a conscious political viewpoint, when it enters its own political engagement while summing up the situation as a whole. In itself a definite type, a sort or form of production does not necessarily guarantee an alternative position in a strict theatre versus institution, performance or installations opposing gallery exhibits of paintings, (...) therefore in a paradoxical way, the alternative can these days appear even at most unexpected places – within the heart of elite culture, in the academic world or just as





well in most massive popular culture, in Hollywood or within the tale of world corporations. Neither the genre nor the formal style as such can warrant anything any more.

The alternative that is not only a matter of critical definition or a market-marketing definition, should be a matter of self-consciousness, of a deliberate decision for a definite position, for one political standpoint... a viewpoint that in the leftist tradition could be called emancipating. In case of a spectacular, incessant discourse of a governing system about itself, not a collection of paintings but a social relation, we can say that at present the alternative/everything alternative is an incessant discourse of subdued classes about the governmental system and their own position within it.

The alternative is not a style, an issue of form, or expression, but an active questioning, the reconsideration of the existing social relations.

In Croatia, as in the rest of Eastern Europe, such traumatic areas are abundant, they are the issues of relation of the majority and the minorities, of language, of relations toward political/ideological past and tradition in general, the role of the church, of ideological repression, of the control or rather the influence of media, the economical and legal problems of privatisation and denationalisation, socio-political problems of relations among political parties, the role of the parliament, civil society, problems of planning and projection of the future, economic and social development, joining the so-called European integration, facing the globalisation process ... But the political approach must not be understood in a narrow sense of the word as to desirable and even necessary engagement in daily politics – exactly as we are reminded by Frederic Jameson, that in the engaged, politicised, alternative production of the '60s-'70s, the

innovations in art, and even more so in the theatre, in case of the most aesthetic and the least politically aware actors and directors, have always been imbued by a firm conviction that a theatre performance is a symbolic gesture of an aesthetic protest but also some sort of praxis, and that changes in the theatre, as minor as they may be, also contribute to the general change of life itself, of the world which the theatre is as well part of as its mirror, a means of its intellectual reflection.

In the world in which it is much easier to imagine its end, the ecological catastrophe than at end of the capitalist production forces, where the old opposition left/right tends to be presented as irrelevant and philosophical ideas like "the end of history" become relevant and support the unchangeable social relations, when the political freedom is substituted by free market, the only alternative is the political one, the acceptance of the antagonism of social relations and one's own responsibility for the present and the future development. And the real alternative to the global is not anti-global, the closing within the frame of a nation-state, it is not preserving the illusion of some authentic (national, ethnic...) identity, but another definition of the global in itself, of emancipation and solidarity.

In that case, alternative culture must not be understood as a certain state and a static style but as an active struggle and political strategy. Today perhaps more than ever before, the words of Walter Benjamin have become true, saying that the aestheticism of politics has to be confronted with a powerful politics of the aesthetic.

(Translated by Neda Karlović, Bratislavović)

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a notebook*

(an outline of a report for the project cultural policy of the republic of croatia, 2000-2004)

Njman Zappa, 1999

* The simple title of this text: A Notebook, was taken over from the French political practice, in which Cahiers have, since the 16th century contained political reports or objections to certain legal or political actions. The text emerged out of no other intention than to encourage a public debate, to which none of the political parties have so far dedicated a single word in their electoral programs.

In order to materialize the transition from the current status into a newly decided one, let us decide that every reform should, as much as possible, stem from ideas and human needs.

W. von Humboldt, Ideas for an Attempt to Delineate the Limits of Efficiency of the State

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II. CROATIAN CULTURAL POLICY 1991-1999: AN OUTLINE

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1. GENESIS OF CULTURAL POLICIES

1.1 Formation of cultural policies and milestones of documents on this is of a more recent date in the European political practice

1.2 In France, for example, a more extensive definition of the state interest in overall cultural property, and above all in the cultural heritage could not be found until Malraux's decree, dated 1959 which preceded the action of 'dispossession', 'distribution', and even 'democratization' of culture. The primary aim of that action is the geographical and social presentation of national cultural values, as broadly as possible.

1.3 In the Netherlands, a country which experts consider to be the most advanced of European countries in the area of cultural planning and strategies of evaluation of the cultural sector, the situation as regards culture was not encouraging as recently as 1973. The political system demanded to 'have its voice heard' in that area, so it is considered that cultural initiatives were often frustrated and explained from a political point of view. The Government request entitled Art and Cultural Policy from 1976 was the first document relevant to the Dutch cultural policy, and is closely linked with its European success.

1.4 On April 16, 1992 the Law on Cultural Policy came into force in the Netherlands, as the first and only law of its kind of that kind in Europe, formulated on the supposition of 'the necessary legitimization of the entire corpus belonging to this separate sphere'.

2. MANNERS OF INCUBATION

2.1 Cultural policies of the developed countries have, in general, been incubated far earlier than they have been articulated. Also, they were incubated in widely different ways.

2.2 In Sweden, for example, the manner of incubation was the result of a severe cultural debate of many years, which started in 1940. At first, The Film Institute, drama schools, the Theatre and Music Council and The Swedish National Travelling Theatre took part in the discussion about national culture, to be followed by other initiatives, groups and individuals, who all judged the policy as inadequate and 'random'. In 1974, the long debate resulted in a report to the Parliament, which then defined eight basic principles of the Swedish cultural policy.

2.3 In Austria, a country with a federalist structure of its own, the manner of incubation was completely different. The Government statement from 1970 about the need to 'take every possible action' on behalf of democratization of society and 'strengthening of co-operation' between provinces, local government and central government based on federalism principles, marks the foundation of the Austrian cultural policy. Primarily it is 'the contribution of the social policy' (F. Sauerwald).

3. STAGING

3.1 A cultural policy is, first of all, one of the policies, clustered

together with economic, social and health policies etc., of the political party or the party coalition which is in power during a certain electoral period. Therefore, the development of most European cultural policies stems in stages.

3.2 A stage is most frequently marked by the basic political principle of the party which forms the cultural policy, and it is rarely named after the person who has influenced its creation.

3.3 The French cultural policy could thus be divided into: The Malraux policy (1959-1969), the post-Malraux policy (1969-1981), the policy of socialist orientation (1981-1988), the policy of liberal orientation (1988-1989) and so forth.

3.4 The Austrian cultural policy could be divided into the cultural policy of the socialists (1970-1983), the cultural policy of the small coalition (1983-1986), the cultural policy of the large coalition etc. These coalitions, however, are characterised by a constant confrontation between 'autocratic' and 'popular' concepts, as well as between competing models of partnership and participation cultural policies.

3.5 It would be difficult to determine the stages of the Dutch cultural policy. It is a sequential creation of the Dutch coalition cultural practice of many years, as well as of the consensus principle that was strictly implemented in all issues raised in this area.

4. IMPERATIVES

4.1 Every cultural policy has its ideological foundations (art, institutions of long standing or of national importance) and classic areas (for example, protection of historically significant monuments, archive materials, environment protection, functioning of museums and libraries and so on), which make the so called systematic support obligatory.

4.2 European cultural policies are therefore articulated by two imperatives, which are often contradictory. They are not only tied to the state by the budget, but also in cultural and historical sense i.e. by the debt imperative to both structural and traditional given. They are tied to the official politics during the ruling, i.e. party term of office by the project imperative.

4.3 Most often, such a project can intervene into the course of the even active solution, the goal of which is a more powerful dynamism and higher flexibility of the entire cultural sphere.

4.4 Only one European project, the Dutch project of cultural expansion, contrary to, for example, the French project of 'democratization' or the Austrian project of 'democratization of culture', has been realised independently from European political coalitions and staged reprogramming of cultural priorities, and is the only project that is markedly developmental and distributed.

5. PROJECT CONDITION, ONE

5.1 The principle of efficiency of the state is a project condition of all its policies, including the cultural one.

5.2 Cultural policies are usually preceded by the necessary steps which the state takes in order to eliminate the obstacles to system efficiency, which are 'incorporated' in the sphere of culture. They are also preceded by various formal and informal 'moves' resulting from the steps already taken and those opposed to them. Thus, a cultural policy is not consumed by static processes of administrative formalisations of distribution

France), stable system of allocation of budgetary means (Great Britain), not by the standard methodology of 'cultural development', a 'planning' that takes into consideration the best sides of the good and the good sides of the bad.

5.3. Cultural policies emerge with the aim of providing complex answers to the uncoordinated or hindered dynamics of relations and forms of participation of the state and society in the 'price' of culture.

5.4. The wider and more diverse the participation in the 'price' of culture is, the fewer from the state influence and 'interference' culture is, but at the same time, it requires a special system of evaluation even more. Comparison of such systems is exceptionally sensitive for the policy, because culture becomes even more active and sensitive to politics through such processes.

5.5. Through the demand for a special system of evaluation of culture and its products, cultural policy provides politics by a goal beyond/or outside of it, for which politics must find new resources.

5.6. Funds from the central, regional and municipal government budgets are allocated into the 'price' of culture in the case of the European countries which are democratically developed. Inner proportions of these funds vary to a great extent from country to country. This price also includes other types of funding: patronage of the arts, private funds and initiatives, tax on cultural industry products (e.g. radio-visual), sports/clubs encouraged by tax deductions etc.

5.7. Proportions of funds allocated from the budgets, for example, Great Britain in 1988 were as follows: 33 % from the central budget, 9 % from the regional and 67 % from the municipal budgets. In Switzerland: 13 % from the central, 34 % from the cantonal and 53 % from the municipal budgets. In Italy: 52 % from the central, 11 % from the regional and 37 % from the municipal budgets. In Sweden: 43 % from the central, 7 % from the provincial and 50 % from the municipal budgets.

PROJECT CONDITION TWO

6.1. Political belief in cultural value, its effects and range of its effects influences articulation of cultural policies all around Europe.

6.2. A high level of that belief is an important condition for the creation of a cultural policy 'worthy of its name' (J. Clavier).

6.3. A low level of such a belief keeps culture – a frequent scene of the state pride and political promises – within reach of 'national solutions', or in other words purely 'stuffed' politics, often practiced by ruling parties, especially in the early European political practice.

6.4. Cooperation between president De Gaulle and minister Malraux is the most recent case of 'the new affinity between culture and politics' since 1945 (J. Habermas), and it was undoubtedly an important project condition for the Malraux cultural strategy.

6.5. Swedish cultural policy documents from 1974 and 1986 provide evidence that the development of political belief is a condition for the autonomous growth of a cultural policy. In 1974, one of the goals of the Swedish cultural policy was to 'concentrate the negative impact of commercialisation'. The same goal was elaborated by the solution reached by Parliament in 1986: 'promotion of cultural pluralism, artistic innovation and value, and through this the action against negative effects of commercialisation'.

6.6. A Swedish parliamentary document from 1996 expresses the view that optimisation of the sphere of cultural values is a sufficient

prerequisite of its efficiency, even when confronted with the destructive forces of the market and marketability. The Swedish policy has, during the last few decades, not only increased the level of that belief in cultural value, but has become a model of politics with a cultural belief.

7. PROJECT CONDITION THREE

7.1. Existence of an anti-project, i.e. anti-projects, has proved to be an important project condition in the articulation of cultural policy itself throughout the European practice.

7.2. Parties or party systems usually support anti-projects, which are either suggested by cultural institutions and formal or informal groups of intellectuals and other cultural workers.

7.3. In general, anti-projects have a counter-offensive effect, putting pressure on the political sphere as such by demanding responsibility for culture.

7.4. Anti-projects are important not only because they suggest new solutions, but also because they lift the old or constant problems in culture. The result of the confrontation of projects and anti-projects regularly represents certain points of agreement as regards cultural institutions or areas, or activities of national importance. At the same time, it expresses considerable differences concerning the 'necessary steps' that have to be taken regarding organization, financing, evaluation, i.e. functioning of the cultural sector.

7.5. Scope of anti-projects, the scope of the cultural will of members of a state community cannot ever be outlined.

7.6. The period between 1960 and 1988 was important for the formation of the French cultural policy. The platform for common behaviour' prepared by two moderate parties (RPR and UDR) contained some chapters on culture and areas of communications.

The anti-project outlined there obliged the state in four points only: functioning of large institutions with the guarantee of their autonomy, providing scientific and technical support to decentralized collectivity and all partners in cultural life, ensuring artistic education on higher levels, and managing cultural actions abroad. The anti-project primarily offers everything else, including patronage – otherwise developed through a simple mechanism of fiscal relief – a principle of 'social responsibility', and favours practices that use such a responsibility or put it to a test.

7.7. Anti-projects undoubtedly strengthen the competitiveness of cultural-political models, and exclude the possibility of the winning ones.

8. ELEMENTS, AREAS AND INSTRUMENTS

8.1. Instruments of cultural policies in Europe are exceptionally different. They differ because they stem from various incubation forms, numerous specific qualities of the development process, and from special observations of project conditions of cultural policies (community efficiency, political trust, competitiveness of models).

8.2. Instruments of the cultural policy which constantly generate new ideas but do not generate continuous support structures (France), greatly differ from those of the cultural policy which generates less ideas, but has a stronger will as regards enabling structures which are beyond the reach of state administration, and with a better overview of all that belongs to culture (Finland),

and the cultural policy which is fully formed on quite a simple concept: 'cultural policy is defined, in art itself' (the Netherlands).

3.3. Instruments of cultural policies in Europe differ in regards to budgetary, cultural and historical, as well as innovative imperatives. Although they are often discordant, those imperatives quite accidentally – respect this and the same thing from every cultural policy – innovative instruments. In search of those, European cultural policies constantly multiply their instruments, but their results appear slowly and disappear fast.

3.4. Malraux's 'towers of culture' had, for example, been the immediate instrument of the 'decolonization' of the French culture in the colonies, but ten year later they were written off and dismissed as a weak and in principle a symbolic result of a 'false' strategy of decolonization (P. Bourdieu).

3.5. The catalogue of arbitral elements and formative areas of cultural policies is an extensive one. As opposed to instruments, most of those elements and areas are easily indicated:

- Forms of state government and self-government;
- Economic power of the country;
- Position and structure of ministries;
- Basic cultural institutions;
- Heritage;
- Instruments of art and professional education;
- Cultural legislation;
- Contemporary artistic creation and activity;
- Publishing;
- Libraries;
- Museums and galleries;
- Theatres;
- Film;
- Media;
- The Net culture;
- Ecological culture;
- Culture of construction and urban planning;
- Design and applied arts culture;
- Amateur culture;
- Culture of minorities;
- Non-governmental associations and initiatives;
- Projects, actions, initiatives;
- Institutions for research and taking of cultures;
- Cultural industry;
- Patronage, sponsorship, citizenship etc.

3.6. The content of the above mentioned, but also of all that was left out, is the only political material of culture. Today, in the contemporary world, it cannot do anything with that material without its 'bill which – according to the standard of the possible – knows what it wants, and wants what it can' (E. Bloch).

4. BASIC OBLIGATION OF A CULTURAL POLICY

4.1. The first principle of the Swedish cultural policy from 1974 reads as follows: 'Ensuring the prerequisites for the freedom of expression', while the one from 1995 states: 'Maximize the freedom of expression and achieve genuine possibility for everyone to take advantage of that freedom'. Similarly, the first principle of the Dutch cultural policy is 'freedom of expression'.

4.2. Although 'freedom of expression' is guaranteed by the constitutions of all democratic countries, cultural policies of the

countries of developed democracy stress the freedom of expression as their own most important aim.

4.3. Freedom guaranteed by the constitutions is not the same as 'the freedom of expression' as the target principle of cultural policies.

4.4. Freedom of creation is a constitutional right of citizens, while freedom of expression is a principle through which a cultural policy takes over the obligation as regards measures for the 'full realization of that right'.

4.5. Freedom of expression is primarily a political, and not a political-category. It is based on 'multiplicity of forms' of art, 'plurality' of culture and 'multiversum' of personality. There are phenomena that politics – as such – can take on and accept only through a 'superior' politics able to protect, support, develop and cultivate them.

4.6. Freedom of expression is the basic obligation of a cultural policy, because no other can take it over, and only society can achieve it.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1. Cultural policies emerge as an answer to the development of the cultural area and to the fact that routine procedures and normal instruments of state administration can no longer meet their demands.

10.2. Cultural policies of the 'free world' countries were acknowledged by a strong ideologization of art and culture in the socialist countries. Therefore, each of them represents a practical interpretation of their common principle that political power and its state administration should be kept 'at an arm's length'.

10.3. Cultural policies are anti-ideological in their origin, and in their continuation they develop as experimental practices of European policies, i.e. as an especially interactive skill needed for the formation of post-national states, and of modern and post-modern society.

10.4. Cultural policy is – so far the only one – licentia poietica of politics.

1. THE SITUATION OF CROATIAN CULTURE

1.1. It is a special problem – that there is no document which would articulate both short-term and long-term aims of a cultural policy on the state level, but cultural policy is deduced from general premises of the legal and political system and de facto only accepted cultural values.

This paragraph is quoted from the second chapter of the national report 'Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia, which was submitted to the Council of Europe on April 8, 1996, and which the European experts considered to be 'an exemplary document'.

1.2. A group of Croatian researchers considers that the Croatian cultural policy in the period between 1991 and 1998 could be 'scored back' to the general character and ineptness of the legislature, to palliative intentions of the ruling political system and general statements about 'domestically accepted' cultural values, but that is not entirely correct. Only a description of the cultural situation in Croatia could be derived from the aforementioned, and consequently a conclusion could be made that during the mentioned period a certain political policy

replaced the Croatian cultural policy

3.3 In the period between 1991 and 1999, culture in Croatia was protected by the Constitution, primarily through its principle of 'freedom of creation' (Article 68), and by several absolute, special laws (12 of them, some dating from the old system in the area of cultural legislation)

3.4 At the same time, values that have been thoroughly affected through principles (obligation, loyalty) and education (paternalism, influence, unification) dominate culture in Croatia, a nation and state in the process of development

3.5 Cultural situation in Croatia appears to be democratised through the advisory bodies consisting of artists and cultural workers which were established within the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and within municipal government institutions, but their advice about 'distribution of funds' are not binding at all

3.6 The national report on Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia is actually the document about the present condition of Croatian culture and about political actions in the sphere of culture, which, however, does not contain any trace of any independent cultural policy

2. THE OFFICIAL ESTIMATE OF 'THE CURRENT STAGE'

2.1. The national report Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia is an official document submitted to the Council of Europe, and consequently its final estimate of the period 1991-1998 could be reported in the official one, although it is not clear whether it was approved through blindness or cunningness of the state administration

2.2. The Croatian state cultural policy in the current stage selectively encourages and directs cultural contents suitable for the purpose of asserting national identity and domestic and international cohesion. Such a stage could be characterized as 'reconservative'

2.3. Selective encouragement of cultural contents suitable for asserting national identity and national cohesion is the key to all 'commonly accepted cultural values' which qualify Croatian culture 'in current conditions' as neoconservative

2.4. Institutions and instruments of actual evaluation in culture, apart from their obligation to develop the nation, also encourage and monitor processes of assimilating the primitive and the traditional, the old-fashioned and the classical, the fashionable and the trendy, the representative and the valuable, the processes necessary for neo-nationalistic and neo-conservative forms of government

2.5. The Croatian state did not give culture a 'consensus' on the cultural policy project, primarily because its ultimate goal is always freedom from the state government control, or control on behalf of it. Short-term and long-term plans of European cultural policies were undoubtedly moulded in accordance with the same goal

3. 'THE CROATIAN STATE CULTURAL POLICY'

3.1. Between 1990 and 1999, the Croatian culture was brought into a situation which does not permit project conditions for the development of cultural policies, but which meets all prerequisites for the creation of the policy technologies with it: 'the Croatian state cultural policy'

3.2. State policies based cultural values primarily seen as historical and other evidence of the work of a spirit favourably disposed (H. von Humboldt) to the given nation, and the state is efficient only when its cultural programs serve expansion purposes

3.3. Funds are distributed on the basis of the Law On Financing Public Needs in Culture (1993) and through processing Programs of Public Needs for the current year, which are formulated by the Ministry of Culture as soliciting for tenders, and through an 'interplay of various interests in decision-making', the result of which are cultural programs which 'serve national interests'

3.4. The formula 'serving national interests' is linked to the 'public needs model' as a 'collective' criterion, but in the process of selection of programs that formula was used directly for clients' purposes, as an investment into persons holding the same political views, cultural substructure and art issues cognate to the neo-conservative policies

3.5. State budget allocations for culture never exceeded the limit of 1 % (3-85 % in 1997). These allocations in general constitute one third of total allocations for culture in the Republic of Croatia. One third is allocated by the city of Zagreb, and one third by other municipal government and self-management authorities

3.6. Exceptionally low budget allocation for culture and the result of thoroughly narrow limit the state puts in cultural activity and its 'positive effects', and elegance of cultural workers and their institutions to the so-called basic but primary needs of the state and state 'clients' of the nation is the state construction (the military, police, administration...)

3.7. Intervent to the concept of state budget and all too important in the concept of national priorities, 'the Croatian state cultural policy' is an ideological construct of a low-budgeted and highly calculated pressure exerted on Croatian culture in the period between 1991 and 1999.

4. INITIATION OF THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT

4.1. The civil initiative A thousand signatures in 1994 was the first invitation to the Croatian government to make public the direction and concept of the Croatian cultural policy with respect to the following: at the inaccurate conditions, in the medium-term development goals: One thousand artists and cultural workers under the motto 'Croatia thinks through culture', and with the request: 'We need a cultural policy which comes from here' raised their need for a public debate about the cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia, demanding that 'The Parliament of the Republic of Croatia should be the scene of the final debate'

The only direct result of this civil initiative was the foundation of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia as a separate state administration unit

4.2. National report Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia, formulated to satisfy the request made by the Council of Europe, cannot be avoided as a serious attempt to articulate a cultural policy, especially since the attempt was as a whole and in its project qualities augmented by the report made by European experts 'The Croatian Cultural Policy / From Obstacles to Bridges' (1998)

4.3. The report made by European experts about the Croatian national report is actually the first lot of possible principles and

area of the Croatian cultural policy

4.4. The text under the title *What does Book mean to Croatia?* was published in November, 1998. This declaration of Croatian independent publishers is an important document which shows, in a systematic way, that the practice of political intervention into culture should be stopped by a Croatian cultural project. Laws that have not yet been made – i.e. Law on Books, Law on Publishing – have to be an expression of such a project, or in other words, the expression of a cultural policy.

4.5. Contents of all other initiatives (the most important among them being formulated in a public discussion on the occasion of enactment of the Law on Rights of Independent Artists and Disengagement of Artistic and Cultural Creation), with the aim of the articulation of a Croatian cultural policy, could be summed up as follows: Only a cultural interest responsible to a project in its entity can protect and develop cultural values, while certain political interests focused on its moment could never do that.

5. MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA: A MOVE AGAINST THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT

5.1. Foundation of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia in 1994 was – although it seems to be quite the opposite – a completely pragmatic move of the ruling party directed against the articulation of a cultural policy and against any initiative which would demand that.

5.2. Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia was founded in order to be "the authentic interpreter" of cultural needs, a state institution which offers the Croatian culture the so-called "adequate solution" or which, in other words, plans those solutions depending on the situation.

5.3. Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia is positioned as the main creator and organizer of the cultural situation, and functions as its main controlling body:

- it initiates and defends laws in the area of culture
- participates in the budget preparations
- decides about the distribution of funds to state supplement beneficiaries
- controls operation of cultural institutions
- appoints principals of public institutions
- appoints managers of national theatres
- performs administrative and other professional tasks relating to the operation of institutions and other legal persons in culture, and on ensuring financial and other conditions for the operation of museums, galleries, theatre, music, stage, visual arts, film and publishing activity
- performs administrative and other professional tasks related to registration, documentation, research and preservation of heritage, protection of environment and landmarks

5.4. According to the scope of its authority, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia is actually the acting manager of the cultural policy in Croatia.

5.5. Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia is positioned in such a way that it is able – to directly "satisfy the needs" of the state policy. It can deal with the needs of artists and cultural workers in a completely pragmatic way: "considering the circumstances", especially since it does not have to achieve the

goals of the cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia that were determined, publicly discussed and voted for in the Parliament.

5.6. European cultural policies influence the position and scope of responsibility of ministries of culture, while the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, through its position and scope of responsibility, influences the lack of cultural policies in Croatia.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. The document which would articulate short-term and long-term aims of a cultural policy on the state level has to be made, so that its content could offer Croatian culture and culture of minorities in the Republic of Croatia, or in other words, all the artists and cultural workers, their projects, actions and institutions, an efficient perspective, while at the same time determining the basic obligations of the state towards them.

6.2. The cultural policy project has to be made on the state level, not only so that the state community could know its short-term and long-term goals and obligations, but also so that it should, through that project, accept the basic principle of European cultural policies – the principle of noninterference of the state with the activities of cultural community. Moreover – so that it could – starting from that principle – consistently direct political willingness, necessary knowledge and financial means towards the realization of the principal support of the independence of "the cultural sector" (autonomous independent bodies, separate funds, cultural legislation, system of its benefits, etc.) In other words: "freedom of creation", the constitutional right of citizens, should be subject to measures for the full realization of that right.

6.3. The cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia project has to be made with the intention of creation of a full autonomy of the process of operating, evaluating and decision-making in culture.

The cultural policy project has to be made so that the state project would no longer act as a patron above the activities and values which do not belong to it, but that it could participate in cultural processes as a partner, at first from a necessary, and then from a larger "distance".

The cultural policy project has to be made so that the ideological creation of "the Croatian state cultural policy" should be removed from the stage together with its powerful instruments.

political clientelism based on "the narrow definition of the national interest" (see the report made by European experts),

institutions of assimilation of prejudice and judgement based on neo-conservatism,

state creation based on arbitrarily determined relations with municipal administration and self-management units

budget minimalism combined with fiscal pressure based on the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, that weak representative of cultural interests,

6.4. The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia has to be made on the state level as a development-oriented document by a consensus of parliamentary parties. Its long-term competitiveness should not be influenced by a change of the ruling political party or coalition, their interests, or, in other

needs, oscillations of political principles. Every subsequent novelty of a possible change of priorities in the project contents should also be made at The Parliament through the principle of consensus.

6.5. The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia has to be made as a document which is, through its contents and aims, an argument for larger budgetary allocations for culture, and a well argued demand for a constant growth of the rate of those allocations, in real terms.

6.6. The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia implies, according to the viewpoint expressed in the report made by European experts, a Ministry of Culture the primary role of which is that of strategic advocate and researcher of opportunities for the Croatian culture and the development of all its capacities.

6.7. The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia should be prepared along the lines of the civil initiative A thousand signatures from 1994, but with the aid of a systematic and staged cultural debate. At every stage it should involve more and more participants (individuals, representatives of cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations, exponents of important cultural projects, representatives of class associations and societies...). It would be finalized in a plenary discussion which would finally articulate The Cultural Policy Project of the Republic of Croatia 2000-2004, as a project forwarded by Croatian artists and cultural workers to the Croatian National Parliament for discussion and adoption.

6.8. The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia should be a common project of all those cultural workers and artists in Croatia who share the beliefs of their European colleagues, who hold that a new framework of cultural policies should be developed, the one that will explain the philosophy and principle of thinking in detail, providing the answers if it is based on and priorities of the cultural policies they will support.

6.9. The cultural policy project of the Republic of Croatia has to be made, but not only to give culture in Croatia a possibility of 'an independent administrative activity' (H. Weber). An independent cultural policy is necessary, because only such a policy acts by constantly exporting 'freedom of expression' from every policy in power, which, on the other hand, never surrenders to that easily.

II. AIMS OF THE CULTURAL POLICY PROJECT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA 2000-2004, AN OUTLINE

- Freedom of expression
- A cultural state
- Autonomy of culture
- Culture in the centre of developmental interest
- Culture: area of learning, scholarship and art
- Contemporaneity of culture
- Cultural heritage
- Cultural legislation
- Law on cultural policies

- **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION** Systematic evaluation of measures (organisational, economic, legal, fiscal) that enable its usage and expansion

- **A CULTURAL STATE** To assure the fact that Croatia is a historical and geographic 'crossroads of cultures', and that interculturality is an important characteristic of the Croatian cultural

identity and the basic feature of its internationalism

- Territorial assertion of the fact counts on the special status of cities of culture, which should be given to great cultural/ historical centres (Rijeka, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, Hvar, Split, Zadar, Šibenik, Rijeka, Pula). It counts on cultural singularities of regions.

They have to determine their institutional cultural (not themselves, factions, mental schools, institutions), defend which protect those singularities, but also spread the cultural contents of the region. Municipal administration and local self-government bodies have to be systematically detached from municipalities, an aspect of central 'culture of' models and hierarchical 'disposition of' 'localities' into the region.

- Civil assertion of this fact counts on the institutions of civil society that have to be considerably encouraged both legally and financially, because they greatly increase maintaining stability of Croatian culture on its way from obstacles to bridges, from local narrow-mindedness to total openness, from administrative indifference to creative investments.

- Political assertion of this fact counts on support for culture of minorities, especially the Serbian minority, as a part of Croatian cultural singularity whose identity was developed side by side with or directly opposed to its parent culture.

- Legal assertion of this fact counts on such a change of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia which would, in a separate article, define Croatia as a cultural state.

- **AUTONOMY OF CULTURE** To develop initiatives and institutions of the decentralisation of culture with the aim of decentralising artists, based on the principle of the Republic of Croatia as a cultural state.

Decentralisation has to be conducted on the state, institutional and geographic levels.

- On the state level that means considerable reduction of the role the state plays in the allocation of budgetary means in culture, all by forming independent, democratically elected, fully professional bodies authorized not only to evaluate, but also to make decisions which are binding, primarily for the Ministry of Culture, by through granting tax benefits to persons and sponsors of culture, and through accurate measures for the creation of independent funds (covering money obtained through sponsorship and patronage, but also from taxes on cultural industry income, of budgetary mechanism, etc.) cultural institutions of national importance, but with a full guarantee of their autonomy.

- On the institutional level that means transfer of competence and functions of state administrative bodies to territorial communities, and within those communities, above all, to independent legal persons (associations, companies, funds) that are closer to certain cultural contents or areas according to the manner and place of their operation. That would gradually put out 'secondary', subsidiary administrative bodies, or a other words, it would reduce their power.

- On the geographic level that means a new 'more just' distribution of cultural infrastructure, regionalized reception or construction of theatres, centres of the new Net culture, libraries, galleries... Democratization of culture is a process the goals of which are spiritual accessibility obtained through the contemporary education system, modern role of artistic experiences of media and maximum self-formation (signatures

focused on 'self-regulation, reduced administration, competitiveness without bureaucratic obstacles etc.) of the area of culture. Its premises are transparency of processes and documents connected with the decision-making (including participation of cultural institutions, clubs, associations, non-governmental organizations and all forms of so-called 'artistic support' about problems, and personality as a basic principle of cultural responsibility) but projects are only objective figures (financial, organizational, production, created personalities, 'teams' and scheduled). Autonomy of culture is a project which is expensive to every state. Although it respects economic power of a state as a community, it does specifically demands contrast changes within its political system, attacking it by its very aims that have been 'declared'.

- CULTURE IN THE CENTRE OF DEVELOPMENTAL INTEREST

To install culture as a power-generating system of society and its continuous process. To put it in the position of a true initiator of economic development and growth. Cultural tourism, cultural industries, graphic and industrial design, construction and urban planning, applied arts etc. have to come into the insight of developmental interest of the Croatian state and society (see the report made by European experts).

- CULTURE AREA OF LEARNING, SCHOLARSHIP AND ART

Creativity of modern science, contemporary education and artistic creativity are basic dynamic potentials of the contemporaneity of the area of culture.

Disciplinary invention of science, inventive structure of education and completely open artistic imagination constantly shape culture, especially when society encourages and expands the network of their interpenetration and inter-determinations on the principle of cultural development of the country.

In accordance with the principle stated in 1990 at a The Parliament session, that the main goal of Croatia is not economic growth, but cultural growth which encompasses art, science and education, it is necessary to bring cultures (scientific, educational and artistic) together in a functional manner. Merely a first step is that would be a far greater state support to the higher art education institutions, foundation of the new ones (for example: high schools of dancing, art-conservation, restoration skills etc.) and reinvigoration of the existing institutions: a more efficient positioning of cultural research institutes, formation of contemporary systems of technical and professional support, new cultural management etc. The second step would concern the foundation of special 'relay' institutions and making concepts of projects for so-called 'interweaving of knowledge': theoretical and practical, and vice versa, freed from the classical belief about the primary role of one of them.

- CONTEMPORANEITY OF CULTURE

In the cultural life of a nation, contemporaneity has the key role. It is the input of all the issues of the so-called 'live culture' and the output of all its problems. Therefore those who work for it or on it have to be taken care of. That means: taking care about the development of the cultural industry (publishing, film, multimedia), but also mobility of 'small' cultural actors (traveling) theatres and studios, projects of 'cultural gentrification', diffusion of cultural events, literature and video stories 'on wheels' etc. Taking care about everything 'experimental', everything that represents alternative culture, but also about the development of the Pop-culture as a markedly decentralized, multicultural and

transnational one. Taking care about the expansion of the network of 'cultural points' and their efficacy.

- CULTURAL HERITAGE. Contemporaneity is an abstraction that requires 'concrete' context, and tradition where it historically exists - is a concreteness which seeks 'abstract' challenges.

Cultural heritage belongs to 'the overall cultural treasure' of a nation as the deepest concreteness of its cultural tradition. It has to be preserved, but its challenges have to be accepted.

Cultural heritage in Croatia today primarily has to be protected from 'improved solutions', but also from 'ideological reductionism'. Old city centres have to be protected from 'internal aggression' a priori cultural heritage. 'Conservation has to become part of urban planning, and landmarks require professional and public surveillance. A more efficient 'investment mechanism' has to be developed' and generations of experts, conservators and restorators, have to be raised. Today, however, the Croatian cultural heritage also represents a challenge against historicism, which is commonly used to misinterpret it, and it puts the authority of modern scientific and professional approach to the test. Such an approach can no longer be avoided. It should be encouraged, and it should require commitment.

- CULTURAL LEGISLATION. Either cultural legislation has to be changed and constructed. It has to be adapted with a large number of international agreements relating to culture which have been signed or accepted by the Republic of Croatia. The Law on Theatres has to be 'made anew', and other basic cultural laws - i.e. Law on Films, Law on Books - have to be added to the legislation as soon as possible.

Cultural legislation should be a legal expression of the cultural policy as one of public policies of the Republic of Croatia.

- LAW ON CULTURAL POLICIES. This law has to be made in order to regulate the entire cultural sphere, conditions of implementation of the determined cultural policy, relation between state and culture, and to define the role and authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia.

(Translated by Marijana Javornik)

Vjara Zuppa is a theoretician and dean of Academy of Drama Art in Zagreb.

festivals & venues

festivals

Art & Music Festival

organised by: The Association for Development of Culture and Civil Society "Meimoid"

55 100 Pula, Tjesina 12

contacts: Željko Herceg phone: ++ 385 99 45 79 43

Draško Bosonac phone: ++ 385 52 21 79 27

e-mail: amf@55.pula.hr

web: www.55.pula.hr

Art & Music Festival gathers Croatian and international rock musicians, collectors, comic artists, literary directors and actors. It is unique in the Croatian context in intertwining three media: music, film and theatre. The Festival offers presentations by young authors, explores their work, educates and awards them. Local and international critics and theoreticians and renowned artists and teachers are invited to this event. Apart from the competition, the Festival offers theatre and concert workshops and a series of panel discussions on the subjects of rock music, theatre and cinema.

Art Workshop Lazzarini

20 000 Dufurinski Poljski 8

phone: ++ 385 20 423 467, fax: ++ 385 20 423 114

e-mail: art.lazzarini@du.hr

artistic director: Slavica Taj

The Lazzarini Workshop gathers Croatian and international theatre companies dealing in informal ways of expression, as well as multimedia artists and musicians. The last three editions concentrated on the social engagement of art. This year, particular attention has been devoted to the form of party, explored by various artists, mainly working in the so-called new media, the aim being to attract new generations and include them in the artistic processes. The idea is not to create yet another festival but to form an exploration site through workshops.

Contemporary Dance Week

organised by: the Croatian Movement and Dance Institute

10 000 Zagreb, Baničeva 5

phone/fax: ++ 385 1 641 154

artistic director: Miro Žagar

Contemporary Dance Week has for seventeen years been offering a survey of contemporary international and local dance scenes. The performances range from "classical" dance to performance, including various productions by well and less well known international artists. Some of the artists featured in the last five editions are Ranskan Dance Co. (Sara-Sara & P), The Sasha Popeljarska Kwartet Theatre, Russell Malphrus Co. and Nina Marlow.

Croatian Small Stage Festival

organised by: HAKO Zagreb and The Culture Office of the City of Rijeka, 51 000 Rijeka, Korzo 16/3

phone: ++ 385 51 30 95 40, fax: ++ 385 51 30 95 37

artistic director: Nenad Šegec

An international festival focused on the companies working in the so-called small stage forms. In contrast to the dominant "theatre of directors" and huge spectacles, it affords the actor and to put it calmly a production. The Festival selects performances on the basis of thematic affinities. The audience is actively involved, particularly in post-show discussions.

Dance and Movement Festival

Svetište/inf

phone: ++ 385 91 25 27 455

e-mail: gauding@svet.hr

artistic director: Gordana Altmirand

The Festival aims to be a gathering site of local and international dance artists, dancers and choreographers, as well as promoters and producers. The idea is to decentralise the Croatian dance scene through linking it with international events, seeking international and interregional coproductions. Apart from the performances, featured also are dance and conversational theatre workshops.

Dubrovnik Summer Festival

organised by: Dubrovnik Summer Festival

20 000 Dubrovnik, Poljana Pasko Milčevića 1

phone: ++ 385 20 412 385, fax: ++ 385 20 427 644

e-mail: director@dsf.festival.hr, program@dsf.festival.hr

manager: Stjepan Prosperić-Rouk

Festival of dramatic theatre, classical music and folklore. The theatre section is mostly based on individualistic productions but also includes performances by other Croatian theatres and international companies. The festival owes its popularity and character to the ambience of the palaces and towers of Renaissance Dubrovnik, as well as parks and gardens, where for over fifty years plays have been performed. One of the oldest festivals in the region.

Eurokaz, Festival of the New Theatre

10 000 Zagreb, Bagojevića 1/1

phone: ++ 385 1 48 47 856

phone/fax: ++ 385 1 48 54 424

e-mail: eurokaz@ztc.zem.net

web: www.eurokaz.hr

artistic director: Gordana Vekić

Eurokaz's basic feature is announced in its descriptive subtitle: Festival of the New Theatre. It brings to Zagreb artists and theatre companies whose work is characterised by new,

challenging views of the world. Eurkaia promotes innovative theatre language, explores the possibilities of stage expression, crossing the boundaries and opening theatre to the new technologies and media. Each edition of the festival focuses on a concept: Body, Iconoclasm: Theatre, Innovations in National Theatre, Moners, etc. Many a world famous "star" has performed on Eurkaia, some even before reaching global fame: Robert Wilson, Secretos (Miguelito Somoza), La Fura Del Baul, Forced Entertainment, Gerald Thomas, Anne Sprinkle, Jan Fabre etc. In the year 2001 Eurkaia celebrates its fifteenth anniversary.

FAK, Festival of Alternative Theatre Expression

organised by: The Alternative Theatre Collectif (FAK) ATTACK
10000 Zagreb, Tinjanski nasip 1 b
phone/fax: ++ 385 1 619 61 34
e-mail: info@autonomous-factory.hr
artistic director: Oliver Senti

FAK was initiated with the idea of promote Croatian and international independent theatre companies.

Working in street, low-budget, student or alternative theatre. The first three editions followed the rule "anything goes" (no selection) as a reaction to the social situation directing those forms of expression. This year a system of selection has been introduced, still focusing on performances, happenings, direct actions, installations and the like. Also featured are workshops, panel discussions and video projections. Social and political engagement remains high on the agenda.

Globea Lani, International Theatre of Chamber Theatre

organised by: The People's Open Education Centre
52 470 Umag, Ispovska 6
phone/fax: ++ 385 52 74 11 18
artistic director: Gane Džur Fey

This new initiative is based on the idea of the Triangle Art Fest, a Festival gathering performances from three countries whose borders intersect not far from the city of Umag: Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. The foundation lies in the integral and three-sided structure of drama, even though it focuses on chamber theatre, Globea Lani offers variety and scope: from contemporary drama, performance and physical theatre, through (near) to the classical forms.

IMK Youth, International Festival of Professional Children's Theatres

organised by: The Mala scena Theatre
10 000 Zagreb, Medveđak 3
phone: ++ 385 1 468 33 52; fax: ++ 385 1 468 33 79
e-mail: antony@malasclena.hr
web: www.ador.hr/imk-youth
artistic director: Ivica Šand

A biennial event surveying the work of contemporary European and Croatian children's theatres. Each edition focuses on one European country (Denmark this year). The Festival also facilitates publishing contacts for international collaboration and touring.

IMYM, International Theatre Festival of the Young

organised by: The Istrian National Theatre
52 000 Pula, Matka Lajović 5
phone: ++ 385 52 21 26 77; fax: ++ 385 52 21 43 03
artistic director: Robert Kaprarić

IMYM is the only workshop festival in Croatia. The project aims to include all segments of creating a theatre production through a series of workshops on various acting methods, dance, stage design, costume design and lighting. Teachers and participants come from all over the globe and the results of their work is presented to the public. Each year, the festival receives a complete production, the opening night of which is the closing ceremony of the festival.

Music Biennale Zagreb

10 000 Zagreb, Bontempsova 9
phone: ++ 385 1 4832 870
fax: ++ 385 1 4832 372
web: www.biennale-zagreb.hr
general manager: Ivo Juričević
artistic director: Biserka Špelić
contacts: Sandra Božić, Producer, e-mail: sander@biennale.hr
Zrinka Lucciani, Producer, e-mail: zrinka.lucciani@biennale.hr

Music Biennale Zagreb 2001: The main idea of the next issue of our festival is the imaginary voyage through the traditions and cultures of world music, but in the light of random events. The programme of this Biennale is quite different from the Biennale '99, and from almost all other of its previous editions. It aims to connect different generations and different styles, tastes, ideas, which taken together create the mood of the world today. Our vision of the programme of the BBZ 2001 is based on different projects which also include some important events in the field of theatre and the multimedia.

PIK, International Puppet Theatre Festival

organised by: International Centre for Culture (ICC)
10 010 Zagreb, B. Magovca 16
phone: ++ 385 1 660 16 26; fax: ++ 385 1 660 16 09
web: puparica.hr/pikfestival
manager: Ljilja Krčin

For over thirty years PIK has been bringing to Zagreb interesting international and Croatian creations in puppet theatre. The Festival is pushing the boundaries of the conventional puppet theatre, presenting the work of far away, traditional non-European cultures, as well as the innovative tendencies sometimes bordering on blurring with the visual arts and performance art. The intended audience are not only children but also grown-ups. Featured also are workshops, lectures, seminars, panel discussions etc.

PDE International Theatre Festival

organised by: Sanela Amirahović KUD-eve Pde
52110 Pula, Scipione's 32
phone/fax ++385 52 22 881
artistic director: Branka Sokol

This festival gathers Croatian and international authors whose work is situated on the elusive line between prole social and amateur theatre. The companies presented here have gone beyond amateurism but are still not acknowledged nor accepted by mainstream theatre professionals. The stage is made from plays to dance and performance. The awards are "festival". The Cloud, The Drop, etc.

Split Summer Festival

organised by: the Croatian National Theatre Split
21 000 Split, Poljana Trga Ujeda's bb
phone: ++385 21 38 59 99
phone/fax ++385 21 38 36 43
manager: Miro Golobac

The Festival includes drama, opera, ballet and concerts, as well as multimedia projects, modern theatre, and occasionally performance. The drama programme mostly deals with the Croatian scene and festival-specific productions, but also includes foreign companies. Alongside performances in closed theatres, open air events are also regularly featured, as well as stagings in less conventional spaces, such as barracks and dumps.

Šibenik International Children's Festival

Organised by: the Šibenik Theatre House
22 000 Šibenik, Krnjačeva's 1
Phone: +385 22 32 134
Manager: Dragica Žilinskić

The international festival that has for over four decades been gathering various artists and performers from all over the world. It is one of the biggest events of its kind in this part of Europe. In its striving to educate children to foster their aesthetic competence and widen their creative, as well as social awareness, the Festival makes sure children actively participate in art, from being the audience to joining in various workshops. The Festival tries to answer the question of including the young in the trends of contemporary art.

Transient Festival

Organised by: Later Art Express

The basic concept of this festival is creating works of art on the spot. The idea is to have the artists come to the festival with but a vague notion of the project they would present to the other artists, with the work coming about from further collaboration; the emphasis

is thus shifted from the finished product to the open creative and intellectual process of communication between the artists as well as with the local population. This year's explorations are entitled Fake Reality, and the aim is to show that artistic processes can influence the blurring of boundaries between reality and illusion. The next topic is Birth and it will consist of workshops, seminars, lectures, dance and theatre performances, installations and gastro-performances.

Urban Festival

10 000 Zagreb, Arsenjeva's 4
phone: ++385 91 53 24 567
e-mail: urban.festival@tiscali.net hr
contact: Miroslav Jelićević

The Urban Festival is a multimedia-project comprising street theatre, performances, art installations, and urban interventions by performing and visual artists. The project is based on the modern concept of art as a social component that tries to communicate actively with the urban population. The Festival will draw together many talented performance artists from different countries, who are trying to change the urban landscape and human behaviour patterns in it. During the Festival Week the city structure will acquire a new dimension - "a city upon a city". The Urban Festival project consists of: Performing and visual art project presentations, Art Workshop, Discussions, theory and practice, and the Alternative city guidebook.

Zadar at Home, International Theatre of the New Theatre

organised by: the Croatian Theatre House and Zadar Ars Nova
23 000 Zadar, Štrkova's 8
phone: ++385 23 33 45 86 fax: ++385 31 49 90
e-mail: zadar.arsnova@tiscali.net hr
artistic director: Kristijan Milič

A festival of modern art, focusing on theatre, but including contemporary dance, performance, the multimedia and visual arts. Though most of the artists come from Croatia, the festival is international. Featured also are the workshops devoted to various topics from juggling to movement or the text.

venues

BAKREN

Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Zagrebu)

(Drama, opera, ballet)

10 000 Zagreb, Trg Maršala Tita 15

Phone: +385 1 4628 550

Publicity Phone: +385 1 4628 530/Phone/Fax: +385 1 4628 531

Manager: Georgij Petro

Cavallo Drama Theatre

(Dramsko kazalište Cavalli)

10 000 Zagreb, Frankopanska 6-8

Phone: +385 1 4898 222, +385 1 4848 548

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 4848 541

Manager: Krista Dolenc

City Comedy Theatre

(Zagrebačko gradsko kazalište komedija)

10 000 Zagreb, Kapci 9

Phone: +385 1 4814 545, +385 1 4813 200

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 4813 179

E-mail: komedija@zg.tel.hr

Manager: Niko Pavlovic

Koprivsek Satirical Theatre

(Satirsko kazalište Koprivsek)

10 000 Zagreb, Ilica 38

Phone: +385 1 424 120

Publicity Phone: +385 1 431 734, Fax: +385 1 424 509

Manager: Gorko Ljubina

Lali Theatre

(Theatre LTD)

10 000 Zagreb, Ševčika 25

Phone: +385 1 4893 603, +385 1 4580 677

Publicity Phone: +385 1 431 734, Fax: +385 1 4843 502

E-mail: danka.lali@zg.tel.hr

Manager: Danka Lalić

Zagreb Youth Theatre

(Zagrebačko kazalište mladih)

10 000 Zagreb, Terzina 7

Phone: +385 1 4811 955

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 4872 968, Fax: +385 1 4872 968

Manager: Davor Bončić

Zagreb Puppet Theatre

(Zagrebačko kazalište lutkalica)

10 000 Zagreb, Trg kralja Tomislava 15

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 434 430

Manager: Nikola Čubilo

Exit Theatre

(Theatre Exit)

10 000 Zagreb, Ilica 208

Phone: +385 1 4814 719

Publicity, Phone/Fax: +385 1 3700 426, +385 1 3704 120

E-mail: teatar@exit.hr

Manager: Milica Rajec

Little Stage Theatre

(Kazalište Male scene)

10 000 Zagreb, Meštrovićev 2

Phone: +385 1 4683 352, Fax: +385 1 4683 370

E-mail: male-scen@zg.tel.hr <http://www.male-scena.hr>

Manager: Vjekoslav Lončar

City Theatre Trnava

(Gradsko kazalište Trnava)

10 000 Zagreb, Meštrovićev 1

Phone: +385 1 3638 000, Fax: +385 1 3638 380

Publicity, Phone: +385 1 325 230

E-mail: kazalište@trnava.hr

Manager: Vlastimira Hriboskić

City Theatre Šar Plan

(Gradsko kazalište Šar plan)

10 000 Zagreb, Banička 57

Phone: +385 1 2338 961, Phone/Fax: +385 1 2338 953

Publicity Phone: +385 1 2338 954

Manager: Tomislav Mirovinski

Puppet Stage L. B. Mahuranić

(Lutkarska scena L. B. Mahuranić)

10 000 Zagreb, Vlatka 106

Phone/Fax: +385 1 4640 953

Manager: Sloba Grgurec

"Zemlja"

(IMOČARNA)

Organisation for Development of Culture (UDK)

10 000 Zagreb, Trgovački mizap b/c (Underpass Factory)

tel/fax office: ++385 1 48 43 453

tel. club: ++385 1 61 58 667

e-mail: ksc@zlj@yahoo.com

ČAKOVEC

Center for Culture Čakovec

40 000 Čakovec, Trg Republike 10a

tel: ++385 40 311 488

fax: ++385 40 312 770

e-mail: center@zakulturanet.hr

web: www.cul-cakovec.hr

Theatre production manager: Slavica Bogdan

DUBROVNIK

Marin Držić Theatre

(Kazalište Marina Držića)
30 000 Dubrovnik, Pred dvoranom 3
Phone: +385 20 426 434, +385 20 426 437
Phone/Fax: +385 20 431 434
Manager: Miro Gozot

LJUBLJANA

Centre for Cultural Compens

(Kulturni centar Ljubljana)
Rudarska 1, 52200 Ljubljana
Phone/Fax: +385 52 867 042

OSIJEK

Croatian National Theatre in Osijek

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Osijeku)
(drama, opera)
31 000 Osijek, Županijska 9
Phone: +385 31 220 700, Phone/Fax: +385 31 220 734
Publicity: Phone: +385 31 220 766
Manager: Zeljka Čigot

Baljet Children's Theatre

(Dječje kazalište u Osijeku)
31 000 Osijek, Tigarova ulazika 19
Phone: +385 31 501 488, Fax: +385 31 501 488
Manager: Jasminka Marand

PULA

Istrian National Theatre

(Istarsko narodno kazalište)
52 000 Pula, mülka Lignje 5
Publicity: Phone: +385 52 216 794, Fax: +385 52 214 303
E-mail: pulsk@pt.teli.hr
Manager: Robert Rapotić

RIJEKA

Irena pl. Župić Croatian National Theatre

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Irena pl. Župić)
(drama, opera, ballet, Italian drama)
51 000 Rijeka, Ujarska 1
Phone: +385 51 337 668, Fax: +385 51 212 600
Publicity: Phone: +385 51 337 680
Manager: Zvezda Šestan

Rijeka City Puppet Theatre

(Gradsko kazalište lutka Rijeka)
51 000 Rijeka, Blija Polaka 6
Phone/Fax: +385 51 212 090, +385 51 211 381
Manager: Ljiljana Galic

SPLIT

Split Creative National Theatre

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Split)
(drama, opera, ballet)
21 000 Split, Poljana Tina Ujevića 6b
Phone: +385 21 585 999, Fax: +385 21 583 643
Publicity: Phone: +385 21 585 987
E-mail: hsk-split@tel.hr
Manager: Miro Gotovac

Split City Youth Theatre

(Gradsko kazalište mladih Split)
21 000 Split, Gosud 10
Phone/Fax: +385 21 256 347
Manager: Ljiljana Štiro

Split City Puppet Theatre

(Gradsko kazalište lutka Split)
21 000 Split, Karmela Tomčića 1
Phone: +385 21 46 099, Phone/Fax: +385 21 356 925
Manager: Rado Gavran

VARAŽDIN

Croatian National Theatre in Varaždin

(Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Varaždinu)
(drama, opera)
42 000 Varaždin, Cesarčeva 1
Phone: +385 42 214 688
Publicity: Phone/Fax: +385 42 211 218
Manager: Mirjam Vargelj

VIROVITICA

Virovitica Theatre

(Kazalište Virovitica)
33 000 Virovitica, Tigar Ljudevita Pata 1, a 2
Phone/Fax: +385 33 721 330
Manager: Miran Hajdić

ZADAR

Croatian Theatre House Zadar

(Hrvatsko kazalište lutka Zadar)
23 000 Zadar, Šetka ulica 8
Phone: +385 23 214 566, +385 23 214 552
Fax: +385 23 214 560
E-mail: hsk-zadar@tel.hr
Manager: Jadranka Švabić

Zadar Puppet Theatre

(Kazalište lutka Zadar)
23 000 Zadar, Šetka ulica 8
Phone: +385 23 430 158, Phone/Fax: +385 23 241 122
Manager: Dorotea Grušević

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a road at night. A utility pole with cross-arms is visible on the right side of the road. In the center, a rectangular sign is illuminated. The sign has the word "action" in a bold, sans-serif font, and below it, the word "frakce" in a smaller, stylized font. The background is a dark, misty landscape with some distant lights.

action
frakce



ZAGREB DANCE COMPANY

Cow Licario Sacred Oppiano

Author and director: Alexey Taran

Choreographers and dancers: Nikola Bujas, Praviša Denahović, Aleksandra Jeneša, Jelena Vukobratović

This dance performance emerged from the co-operation of Alexey Taran, a Cuban-Venezuelan choreographer and four dancers of the Zagreb Dance Company. In the process of creation the dancers cease to be only performers - they freely express their individuality, their emotional and physical experiences. Thus they become choreographers, that is co-authors. Although it is based on fictional characters that come from the narrative structures of two novels, the very performance, due to its brilliant energetic movements that transcend the borders of the physical and its strong emotions, becomes the expression of the performer's personality.

"The persons hang on the strings of death that hold the movement of bulging muscles while streaming through the air with homosexual movements of a pronounced pulse that is rubbed out under a rise-fall-tester light. There is no spoken voice, only a trembling movement of the intestinal wheel that connects them with its pulsation." (Alexey Taran)

ARTS THEATRE

Slowing-down & Uncertain Story

Director: Bobo Jelić

Screenwriting and text: Nataša Rajković

With: Ana Karić, Katarina Bolbrečić Gavril, Nataša Dangubić, Dražen Švok and Tvorilo Jurić

Slowing-down This is not a performance, but an excerpt from the work on a performance. It is therefore not something finished and defined. It is in the phase of emerging. It deals with the daily life of an average, middle-class family - a staged tour of their afternoon time. But in order to show an authentic hour in a family, every face has to be burdened with all the previous hours. Faces turn into people being filled with information about their characters, interests and memories. (Bobo Jelić)

Uncertain Story The actors keep their own names and build characters similar to themselves. The characters are composed of their own, real and imaginary, life stories. Thus they reveal attitudes and emotions that belong not only to the characters but also to themselves. Performers share the stage with the audience in such a way that the viewer becomes a part of seemingly simple, everyday conversations. "Apart from the fact that the story of each character is different in content the way they are determines the style and the way they feel determines the genre." (Nataša Rajković)

STUDIO MARI

Cartography

27

Choreographer: Miro Sevidel

Performers: Petre Serjijewski, Zrinka Lukšić, Zoran Vukelić, Marko Matković

This is a dance performance inspired by the mythological of Borges' story "Of Rigour in Science." In that Empire, the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that a map of a single Province occupied a whole City. Apart from impressive forms of dance and movement it also includes video (simultaneous screening of the performance), a juggler's play with knives, a strong visual-arts element in an interesting stage design made of stone and the ward closely linked to the movement "Walk upright, do not lower your head and do not turn it towards the sky, looking seriously around yourself! Do not put wrinkles on your forehead and do not knit your eyebrows! Make sure your gaze is not roaming aimlessly."



NATIONAL THEATRE BITOLA, MACEDONIA

Migrant Workers

28

Director: Branko Boševac

Choreographer: Jagoda Šerševa

Migrant Workers is a work of the Macedonian dramatist Anteo Penco and it is the masterpiece of the so-called "belova drama," a genre that dominated the drama of the southern Slavs from the mid 19th until the end 20th century. In a spectacularly melodramatic way, this piece connects the social problems (the poor Macedonian presents looking for work in the developed countries - Serbia being the promised land here), the breakdown of traditional moral values and the curse and pathos of national pride. The director of the performance - the Croatian artist Branko Boševac, toured Europe with his multicultural spectacles. With this performance - created in co-operation with the exceptional energy and musical skills of the actors and the young composer Mirjan Jakov, and in a mode unusual for him - using distant, ironic parables and deep insights into the archaic emotionality - he developed a performance of stunning classic modernity.



140 00. & TEATAN ITO

Man.Chair

Director/choreographer: Goran Sergej Probst

Scenography: Ivana Šajko

Music: Helge Holmeggger

Performers: Mědina Bajus, Pravičan Đorđević, Damir Barčig Indol

Man.Chair is interdisciplinary dance-impro performance, which rejects any theme or "statement". There are, rather, some parameters of contradictory relations between body and object, such as the difference between physical characteristics of the chair and the mental investment of energy and emotion in it. It objectifies body, language between natural & artificial bodies, relations between different "materialities" of bodies.

2



LIRERDANCE STUDIO

The Sun Stopped Gazing at Miracle

Choreographer: Rajka Pavlić

Scenography: Zeljka Turčinović

Performers: Erzulja Nikolić, Dina Baksa, Alen Gotić, Ana Jurić, Lariša Lepović, Lovorka Puk, Valentina Krstić

The leading motif of the performance is the symbiosis between the Croatian folk tradition and the contemporary dance movement. The choreography uses the elements of folkloric rhythm and steps and it stylises and reshapes them into an individual dance expression. "The performance focuses on a human being who seeks, touches, meets and passes by another human being. They lead togetherness in movement, rhythm and a traditional dance that is a symbol of collective consciousness. It discovers traces of gods and they become his primordial need for being, socialising and belonging. The individual crystallises from the collective. It longs for love, but for an ironic perspective on itself as well." (Zeljka Turčinović)

3



OR INDOL

HOUSE OF EXTREME MUSIC THEATRE

Rough ride or of the spirit

Performing: Damir Barčig Indol, Dubravka Šikić

Soundtrack & live music: Helge Holmeggger

Video animation: Nicole Hewitt

Special guest: Damer Prica Kufec (saxophone)

"The performance is based on my experience of riding a bicycle in the city, surrounded by hostile cars and threatening trains. The bike-man burns his own energy, filling the solitary space of emptiness between the frenetic metal car bodies, striving to always be a missed target." (D. Barčig Indol)

4

EXIT THEATRE

14

50%

Concept and direction: Nataša Lefebvre

Video: Ricky Hrivati / Vjeran Pavlinec

Performers: Nerina Iva Gatare, Sanja Hromar, Tinko Jurč, Edin Ljubić and Gana Lorenci

50% is a performing score for four actors, four video monitors and an overhead projector. It aims at being a performance. It deals in everything that is unnecessary. It is the aesthetic of disposable things, the content of the casual, the general banality of the ironic-contemplative and the intimacy of the plastic. It collects the pieces of fragmented pictures that can be compared with a number of adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions in the grammar of a language. Or, without, by, with, beside, past, and under reflect certain feelings for the state of things, for reality and the "nonreality"ness.



HMM THE CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE OSIJEK

Alaska Jack

Screenwriting and direction: Sada Anđić

Stage design and video: Sada Došen

Video: Sada Anđić, Hrvoja Barišić, Aneta Čurković, Tatjana Bertok, Ljiljana Horjan, Vjekoslav Janković and others

"The main thing in the performance is the actor's sword, that is the thing he is ready to put in front of himself. Alaska Jack is an expression of a generation of young actors." (Sada Anđić)

The technology of the story is constructed from a number of protagonists and events that seemingly independently of each other are being born, ending, give up, diminish and are reincarnated. Genre and location could perhaps be of those of a funeral feast. However, it is better to choose at random among other expelling rituals: weddings, graduation balls, or simply a wild party—in order to enjoy Alaska Jack the most important thing is to have frozen frames of memory. A stockpile of stories, myths and relationships recorded long ago... First the film displays of the last war and then the brainwashing labs in Croatia created the Alaska generation at the end of the century. This is the generation of those who have coded the recent time into the subconscious and armed themselves with feelings."



CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN SPLIT

15

Croatian National Theatre in Split is one of the most innovative companies in Croatia. It is known by it's international collaboration and many great performances and successes at international festivals. Their projects include collaborations with J.F. Peyrache, K. Gremion, P. Magalhães, I. Buljan etc. Program

Bernard Marie-Koltès: Povratak u pustinja/ Returning to desert

Director: Ivica Buljan

Mariana Bistrich

Director: Ivan Leo Lomi

Performance: Petar Griman

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS



JASNA FRANKIĆ - BRKLIJAČIĆ Fudban 1.

Author/choreographer: Jasna Frankić Brklijačić

Video: Mladena Petek, Jasna Frankić Brklijačić

Performers: Zadar Dance Company, RUO Praha - IFSK "Kunice"

Fudban is a dance project built on the potentials of the specific location - island Uglješ. Project connects medium of theatre, ambient, installation and gallery. The aim of the project is to make an artistic transfer between generations. Music of the Brazilian Indians is merging with the traditional ethnic music of the women from island Uglješ.
Duration: 40 min

LINKS!

Chob-Ing! Dance

Authors: Iva Neretić Galić, Krišto Šimund, Ljiljana Zagorac

Performers: Sandra Bendić, Misa Čulek, Iva Neretić Galić, Zrinka Lukšić, Kika, Barbara Matijević, Željko Valenta, Ljiljana Zagorac

Video authors: Sanjko Križevc i Lala Ristić

Music: Devo Rocco

Chob-Ing! Dance is built on a series of dance intervention done at the Big Torino Festival, Big Bang Festival in Moscow and at the airport in Zagreb. Event isn't link to a definite duration time, the performance starts in the moment when performers are entering the space of airport.

LINKS! dance project is a group of professional dance artist who gathered in 1997 to investigate unusual approaches to creating and performing dance. Their projects are taking place on various sites and locations, bringing together artist from different backgrounds, allowing individual differences to create new move.

Duration: 12 min

SHOW CASE PRESENTATIONS

JASNA FRANKIĆ - BRKLIJAČIĆ Ping-Pong

Choreo-director: Jasna Frankić - Brklijačić

Assistant: Darko Brklijačić

Assistant-writer: Silas Šarfo

Performers: Miro Bicanec, Kariša Čind Luminar, Dražen Čulek, Aleksander Anđić

The theme of the performance is affirmation and negation of communication. The structure of the performance is built on the method of choreo-dramaturgy. Sound structure is made from the document of the Dragutin Šurbeta's ping pong match from the world championships in Tokyo.

RAD IN. & ZADINEH DANCE ENSEMBLE MIM

Site/site type of the site:

Choreography: Nikola Bujas

Performers: Jelena Vukmanica, Nikola Bujas

Site of the site / Site of the site:

Choreography: Pravedan Džalilović

Performers: Nikola Bujas, Pravedan Džalilović, Aleksandra Janova

MIM project is a made from three choreography pieces. First choreographed by Nikola Bujas, second choreographed by Pravedan Džalilović and third done by Aleksandra Janova. High quality dancers are re-creating their private dance systems: relations between space and movement, body and time, possibilities of the physically limited body (blindness), and the adjustment of body to external elements such as costume.

HYSTERIA NOVA

D-Ratio Corporis

Choreographer: Marija Ščehel

Marija Ščehel recently finished her dance studies in Canada and established the new company in Croatia. Her choreography is an experimental work in progress focusing on interpretation through structured expression and exploration of the dynamics of movement.



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